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ABSTRACT

This 24th volume of "English Leadership Quarterly" contains articles on topics of interest to those in positions of leadership in departments (elementary, secondary, or college) where English is taught. Each issue focuses on a different theme. Articles in Volume 24 Number 1 focus on matters of thinking and are: "A New Way of Thinking: Beginning Teacher Coaching through Garmston's and Costa's States of Mind" (Jennifer Abrams); "Writing the Care of the Self: Higher Order Thinking in Reflective Journals" (Josh M. Slifkin); "Hands-On Thinking and Learning: A Hands-Down Favorite" (Karen Schramm); and "So, Why Not Write?" (Hongliang Zhang). Articles in Volume 24 Number 2 focus on journal writing are: "Journaling to Become a Better Writer: Why Journals Work" (Allison D. Smith); "Dialogue Journals in Multicultural Education" (Katherine P. McFarland); and "Creative Writing Journals" (Kay McSpadden). Articles in Volume 24 Number 3 focus on alternative assessment and are: "Beyond Standardized Testing: A Case Study in Assessment's Transformative Power" (Teresa B. Henning); and "Effective Monitoring during Class Time" (Jennifer Abrams). Articles in Volume 24 Number 4 focus on teachers as researchers and are "Collaborative Action Research: Helping Teachers Find Their Own Realities in Data" (James A. Salzman; Donna Snodgrass; Donald Mastrobuono); "Teacher Research: An Alternative Ethic in Urban Teacher Preparation" (Kristien Marquez-Zenkov and Jane A. Zaharias); and "Designing Effective Action Research Projects (Katherine P. McFarland). (NKA)

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English Leadership Quarterly, 2001-2002

Editors
Henry Kiernan
Bonita L. Wilcox

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ENGLISH LEADERSHIP
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▶ IN THIS ISSUE

Matters of Thinking

Bonita L. Wilcox, editor

In *A River Runs Through It* (1975), Maclean writes, "All there is to thinking is seeing something noticeable which makes you see something you weren't noticing which makes you see something that isn't even visible" (pp. 100–01). Still, most of us would agree that there is much more to thinking. In fact, even though we may think that we are pretty good at thinking, we wouldn't miss an opportunity to improve our thinking strategies. As English teachers, we discuss the benefits of *reflective* thinking and metacognition, knowing that thinking about thinking can result in deeper understandings of how we teach and learn. As writing teachers, we encourage *creative* thinking, asking students to generate ideas, brainstorm, and synthesize information to see things in a new way. As reading teachers, we want students to do *critical* thinking, as they organize, analyze, and evaluate what is already there. When we teach cooperative problem solving, we want students to learn to do *parallel* thinking, a constructive way of thinking in six directions. The point of parallel thinking is that the "experience and intelligence of everyone" are used; looking and working in the same direction can be more constructive than arguing opposing points of view (DeBono, 1999, p. 12).

How do we teach and learn these different kinds of thinking? Often we model our ways of knowing and habits of mind so students can observe and imitate our strategies. Other times we teach skills directly, as when we guide students through an investigation using the scientific method, or we show them how to compare two concepts using a Venn diagram. Sometimes we teach thinking skills indirectly, such as using portfolios to teach self-monitoring and mental management. We assume that these thinking skills will automatically transfer to other situations. Unfortunately, researchers claim that the transfer is not automatic (Tishman, Perkins, & Jay, 1995). Perhaps, we need to do more thinking about the transfer of thinking skills to new situations.

Another interesting idea from Tishman & Perkins (1997) has to do with the language of thinking. "Just as the colors on an artist's palette influence the painting that emerges, the words we have available to us influence the way we think about the world, including the inner world of our own mental life" (p. 371). The language of thinking can usually be found in journals where we make our thinking visible. Journal writing or private writing is actually a "means of watching yourself think" (Levy, 2000, p. 30). My journal writing would show that I am a *reflective* journal keeper. My concern is with germinating ideas, connecting thoughts, taking stock, and mediating. I use thinking words such as *explains, relates, considers, discusses,*

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theorizes, compares, organizes, and *ponders.* A *collective* journal keeper, on the other hand, might use words such as *lists, labels, chooses, attends, classifies,* and *searches.* The collector is more concerned with quotations, scraps of life, conversations, and talk. The *evaluative* journal keeper uses higher-order thinking words, such as *assesses, estimates, appraises, criticizes, concludes,* and *persuades.* The evaluator is concerned with making judgments, doing research, and documenting evidence. A language of thinking is easily embedded in everyday classroom activities and discussions with all ages of learners.

From studies and publications on cognition throughout the '80s and '90s, we have learned about the power of making thinking visible. In this issue, Josh Slifkin summarizes his study about different levels of cognitive activity found in student-response journals. Jennifer Abrams writes about cognitive coaching and helping teachers to see a new perspective through asking and answering specific questions. Karen Schramm discusses the thinking involved in hands-on learning with college students. Hongliang Zhang gives us some thoughtful advice about writing for publication, connecting reading, writing, and thinking. And, finally, the book reviewers share their thinking about what they have read. Making thinking visible requires that we record our thoughts and reflections. Thinking about our thinking will help us to better understand our understandings as we continue to develop in our leadership roles.

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A New Way of Thinking: Beginning Teacher Coaching through Garmston's and Costa's States of Mind

Jennifer Abrams, Palo Alto Unified School District, Palo Alto, California

A couple of months ago, I was having a difficult time seeing a problem from my supervisor's point of view. Cranky, flustered, and getting a bit self-indulgent, I called my coach.

"Athena, I can't see beyond myself. I need to get flexible. I need a shift." Athena acted as me in a quick role-play. It took no more than a few sentences from her mouth before I screamed, "Stop! I sound awful. I sound ridiculous. No wonder my supervisor can't see my perspective. I wouldn't be willing to work with me either!" Having stepped outside of my own filter, I worked with Athena to design a compromise that made sense for both my supervisor and myself.

Sounds like a coach's dream, doesn't it? A conscious and willing colleague who knows what is wrong with her thinking and then asks someone to help her do some effective problem solving? Not necessarily. When I teach Robert Garmston's and Arthur Costa's States of Mind to new teachers, the same shift in understanding takes place. The new teachers are able to see which states of

The Conference on English Leadership (CEL) of the National Council of Teachers of English is an organization dedicated to bringing together English language arts leaders to further their continuing efforts to study and improve the teaching of English language arts. The CEL reaches out to department chairs, teachers, specialists, supervisors, coordinators, and others who are responsible for shaping effective English instruction. The CEL strives to respond to the needs and interests germane to effective English instruction from kindergarten through college, within the local school, the central administration, the state, or the national level.

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mind they are most likely to get stuck in, and they know they can ask coaches for assistance.

Bob Garmston and Art Costa wrote up the States of Mind for their work on Cognitive Coaching, a coaching framework based on the premise that teachers have the capacity to reflect upon their teaching and self-direct their actions based on new information gleaned from working with a coach. Said another way, through a deliberate and focused series of questions in a conference, a coach can lead a teacher to a different level of thinking, and therefore, to better classroom practice.

The piece from the Cognitive Coaching training I utilize most is the States of Mind. Teachers, no matter how far into their careers, can get "stuck" working on organizational, personal, or professional problems. Issues with a parent, an inability to help a particular student, or a bad day when teaching seems like the worst job in the world affect all of us at some point during the school year. Looking at problems through the filter of a certain state of mind could be the way to see *beyond* the particular issue into what type of thinking might be halting the process of coming to a solution.

I teach the states of mind in my new teacher trainings to help participants articulate more effectively what might be getting them "stuck" in their work. In a 15-minute Post-it lecture, enhanced with stories from teaching or the work of colleagues, I welcome them into the world of problem solving through the five states of mind.

Below is a description of the five States of Mind, a few ways a new teacher might signal to a coach when he or she needs to shift within a state of mind, and then a question or two a coach might use to move a new teacher onto a different level of thinking.

Efficacy: *Knowing that one has the capacity to make a difference and being willing and able to do so.* New teachers often wonder if they are doing *anything* right. Kids might talk out during a lecture, declare they didn't understand a thing said about Shakespeare, or complain when given a lower grade than expected. New teachers might say, "I don't know what to do," "The students are so unmotivated," or "I can't deal with those kids." New teachers often feel unable to make a difference, but by working through a series of questions, coaches can help them shift their perceptions, change their behavior, or offer a choice of options. Questions like "What have you done in the past that seemed to be successful?" or "What might you do in that situation next time that would make you feel in control?" or "I am sure many things went through your head as the discussion went in that direction. What choices did you consider and why did you choose to go with the one you made?" are all questions that put a sense of ownership and empowerment back in the teacher's conversation, enabling the teacher to feel more capable and in charge.

> *Looking at problems through the filter of a certain state of mind could be the way to see beyond the particular issue into what type of thinking might be halting the process of coming to a solution.*

Flexibility: *Knowing one has (or can develop) options to consider; being willing to acknowledge and demonstrate respect or empathy for diverse perspectives.* We are all chiefs in our classrooms and sometimes just cannot see beyond ourselves. There are times when new teachers think to themselves, "How do the kids all think like that? I don't get it." Inflexible thinking can come across in comments like "I don't understand how anyone can work with this kid," "Everyday there is something else to attend to instead of my curriculum: a rally, a test, an assembly, a new schedule. Doesn't anyone see I am trying to teach around here?" and "I know this child has a 504 accommodation, but is extra time on every assignment really necessary?" All of these statements signal a coach to assist a new teacher to look at the issue with a new lens that helps the teacher see the value in another person's choice or rationale. As coaches, we should not play "devil's advocate" to get the teacher to see our "correct" perspective, but we do need to assist the teacher in seeing that there is *another* perspective. Questions like "What might the administration be thinking was best for students when they made the decision to shorten classes to create time for the assembly?" or "What might the student be thinking about in this situation?" move the teacher to another angle. Seeing from more than one perspective is always helpful in resolving a problem effectively.

Craftsmanship: *Seeking precision, refinement, and mastery; striving for exactness of critical thought processes.* New teachers, in a mad dash to answer a question as they rush off to another class, have been heard to say, "I am starting *All Quiet on the Western Front* tomorrow, but I don't know what I will focus on exactly. Maybe theme or character," or "Yeah, the kids left the room today a few minutes early. I know that my colleague next door gets angry but hey, sometimes I finish early and it seems silly that they just sit around." This is the one state of mind around which I suggest coaches tread carefully. Coaches are expert practitioners who have honed their craft, and they need to assist others without becoming too intrusive or consultative. Asking questions about the specificity of assignments ("What are the key points on the rubric for this type of paper?"), the scaffolding done to make the assignment a successful one ("What skills will you be teaching

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this week so the students feel successful on the paper?"), and the outcome of a lesson ("What will the students take away from today's lesson?") continue to put the responsibility of refining lessons in the hands of the new teachers and make them successful educators.

Consciousness: *Monitoring one's own values, intentions, thoughts and behaviors and their effects.* Some new teachers have a "with-it-ness" in the classroom and it shows. They have eyes in the back of their heads, sense when someone is off task, and know when they are getting angry and ready to blow up. Others carry on with a lecture as students glaze over, not batting an eye as side talk affects a classroom discussion. New teachers needing a little "wake-up call" in this state of mind have said, "Man, the period got away from me. I looked up and the hour was over," or "Wow. I didn't notice he went to the bathroom for *that* long." Coaches can assist new teachers by asking them questions that encourage reflective thinking (a metacognitive approach). Key questions in this state of mind include "As you look back on the class, what do you think went well?" "I noticed you paused when the student made a rude comment. What were you thinking?" and "What might you do differently next time?" Knowing where one is, internally and externally, has a great impact on effectiveness for a new teacher.

Interdependence: *Contributing to a common good and using group resources to enhance personal effectiveness.* Oftentimes in teacher education programs, we are taught how to work with children but not how to work with adults. Then, more often than not, we go into a class isolated from the rest of the school and become chiefs of our own domain. If we are to work effectively with our colleagues, we need to see beyond our classroom and into the school itself. When it comes to this state of mind, coaches might hear a new teacher say, "I am getting some flak for not coming on time to all the meetings, but I have so much work to do," or "I feel like I am doing all the work at my grade-level meetings." Coaches can assist new teachers by asking questions such as "What were the factors in your decision to give more time to lesson planning than to meeting with the staff?" or "How might you find ways to ask for more help at the grade-level meetings?" Becoming a systems thinker and seeing one's role in the school are crucial parts of becoming a professional educator. Coaches can expand the thinking of the new teacher by introducing the need to be interdependent and collegial.

> *If we assist others to think more effectively about their thinking, help them make responsible choices, and then support them as they take action, we have been of service to our students and our profession.*

As beginning teacher coaches, we work to help new teachers reflect upon and refine their practice. If we assist others to think more effectively about their thinking, help them make responsible choices, and then support them as they take action, we have been of service to our students and our profession. Garmston's and Costa's States of Mind offer us one framework in which to work and assist new teachers in becoming self-directed, responsible educators.

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Call for Manuscripts

ELQ is seeking manuscripts for the August 2002 issue on "Leadership and Literacy." A recent article by Dana Grisham (*ReadingOnline*, April 2000) states, ". . . many of us now include visual literacy, technological literacy, critical literacy, media literacy, and other literacies in our thinking about what it means today to be literate." As experts in the English language arts, how do we define and teach literacy? What does it mean to be literate? Illiterate? Aliterate? How do we encourage literacy learners? How do we continue to develop our own literacies? What leadership tasks will be required as we move toward new definitions of literacy in our rapidly changing environment? Submission deadline is **April 16, 2002**.

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Writing the Care of the Self: Variances in Higher Order Thinking and Narrative Topics in High School Students' Reflective Journals

Josh M. Shifkin, Brashear High School, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

When students write reflective journal entries, they create a window into their worlds, a glimpse at their belief systems and the cultural norms that have helped shape their identities. Reflective journal writing may even become an act of taking care of oneself by encouraging personal and cognitive growth. Students relate personal thoughts and experiences to literature, as if to validate those experiences that they describe. In turn, teachers become recipients of these reflections and must find a way to help shape the writing. Teachers decide whether student writing is thoughtful, and what kind of credit or grade it deserves. Our assessment or evaluation might make or break a student's love of writing—lift a student up to a sense of personal triumph, or send him or her spiraling into the depths of critical despair. Teachers who infuse higher order thinking skills into this reflective or "careful" writing make that writing a conduit for a student's personal and academic growth.

This reflective writing differs from notions of confession, which imply a sense of catharsis that may not include the act of thinking, especially critical or higher level thinking. This genre of writing aims for truth-telling, and also views the act as knowledge-in-process. It provides reflection with a critical meaning that goes beyond catharsis and absolution. Instead, it echoes Foucault's (1988) idea that reflective writing can promote a greater sense of self-knowledge, one that extends beyond formal educational structures.

Theoretical Impetus for the Study

Journals and Reflection

Journal writing provides an exceptional means to study and assess students' reflective thinking and writing. Anson and Beach (1995) and Fulwiler (1987) have written of the journal's positive effect on students' thinking in classroom activities. Beach (1993) has also noted how journals can allow students a way to "stand back and reflect on the meaning of their experience" (p. 58).

Journal writing provides an exceptional means to study and assess students' reflective thinking and writing.

D'Arcy (1987) and Tashlik (1987) contend that journal writing offers students direct entrance into texts. Journals can ultimately become conduits to students' personal and private ideas of the texts they read in class.

Reflective thinking and its effect on student voice can take many forms in the pedagogical process. For example, Newkirk (1997) provides many illuminating personal accounts of his own students to show the good effects of reflective thinking. Journals can also serve a public function in the classroom environment. They provide students with a voice toward classroom discussion. As Summerfield (1987) writes, "we talk to ourselves primarily in order to talk more effectively to others" (p. 37). Student logs and journals give students a different means to organize and refine their own thinking. Burnham (1987) writes that journals are places where "good writing" can take place. He adds that journal-writing creates a space for emotional and critical growth—even a path toward higher order thinking skills. Journals are excellent tools for students' reflection.

High Order Thinking

Bloom et al. (1956) helped to clarify the concept of higher order thinking, which includes six levels of cognitive activity: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. *Knowledge* includes acts of recall and memorization. *Comprehension* refers to acts of translation, interpretation, and extrapolation. *Application* provides proof that "given an appropriate situation," one can use knowledge and comprehension "correctly" (Bloom et al., 1956). *Analysis* describes how we break down specific material into its components "and detection of the relationships of the parts and the way they are organized" (p. 144). The act of *synthesis* is one of combining elements or completing them. Finally, *evaluation* includes both quantitative and qualitative "judgments about the value of material and methods" (p. 207). Of these six levels of thinking, only the latter four are higher order thinking operations. Perkins (1992, 1995) argues that educators who promote such higher order thinking skills in combination with a language of thinking advance a "metacurriculum." Such a curriculum acknowl-

edges reflective intelligence as a necessary tool toward greater understanding, one that extends beyond rote memorization.

Purpose of the Study

This project studied occurrences and variances in higher order thinking within a reflective journal environment. The investigation charted the potential for higher order thinking within a natural history, a developmental narrative analysis, and throughout a holistic assessment process. The study investigated two questions: 1) Where does higher order thinking naturally occur in reflective journal writing? and 2) What is the connection between the narrative topics of those reflective journals and variances in levels of thinking?

Method

The collected data is from a year-long case study of one of my tenth-grade English classes. As this study did not examine cultural differences, I did not take into account differences in the students' ages, cultural backgrounds, religions, etc.

The primary method of this investigation was narrative analysis through close readings of student journals from which a holistic picture of student learning emerges. Extending the work of Labov (1972), Riessman (1993) notes that narratives are created from "disordered experience" (p. 4) where "meaning is fluid and contextual, not fixed and universal" (p. 15). Indeed, narratives act as "social discourses" that contain exchanges of power relations (p. 65). Additionally, "narrative research does not require replicability of results as a criterion for its evaluation" (Lieblich, Truval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998, p. 10). Instead, it provides research with "a range of possibilities" to assist researchers in understanding the historical, social, and cultural aspects of their subject(s) (p. 167).

Because qualitative research is descriptive and searches for meaning in a natural setting, I applied a developmental methodology to narrative analyses. Thus, a developmental approach that infuses characteristics of a genealogical method does not search for origins, but instead investigates the layers of information, stressing factors possibly forgotten. These journals present instances of advanced cognition where educators might not have thought there to be any.

I viewed students' journal writing as developmental natural histories (see Gould, 1991). The interrelationships of these sites within a natural history help to illuminate possibilities for further growth. I examined sites of cognition to see if higher order thinking existed in an informal, written environment. The findings reflect various points—variances—in student thinking, until now ignored, but equally important as a progression that shows a formative growth. Higher order thinking is formative and evolutionary. Guerin, Labor, Morgan, Reesman, and Willingham (1992) write that close reading "begins with a sensitivity to the words of the text with all their denotative and connotative values and implications. I read selected narratives closely for specific sites of higher order thinking.

Instrumentation

Based on Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of cognitive skills, I created an original matrix to code higher order thinking in student writing (see Figure 1). This matrix illuminates a natural history of higher order thinking in student writing, and maps the possible adjustments throughout the year. It provides a quick and effective means to catalog higher order thinking in reflective journals using a two-letter code to represent each level, and numbers within each code to denote progressively more complex operations within that level. Like all assessment scales, this matrix provides a limited scope of possible cognitive and metacognitive activities. Also, students' writing may fit into one or more levels; these multiple sites of cognition continually create new activities—cognition that fits between the lines of the matrix.

Procedures

At the beginning of the year, I provided all students with a "composi-

Higher Order Thinking Matrix

Key: AP = Application AN = Analysis SY = Synthesis EV = Evaluation

Label Writing	If it:
AP1	Applies learned concepts to prior knowledge
AN1	Separates complex concepts into individual parts
SY1	Anticipates future actions based on learned concepts or prior knowledge
EV1	Judges learned concepts or prior knowledge
AP2	Connects learned concepts with a new situation
AN2	Classifies individual parts of complex concepts
SY2	Combines individual ideas into complex concepts
EV2	Persuades readers with learned concepts or prior knowledge
AP3	Exhibits advanced organization skills with learned concepts
AN3	Compares/contrasts individual parts of complex concepts
SY3	Creates new complex ideas based on individual concepts
EV3	Assesses or recommends change to learned concepts

Figure 1.

tion book" that they used as an in-class journal. I assigned journal entries—a minimum of five to seven sentences—throughout the year, based on course content. Students were told that their journal writing would not be graded or annotated; they would only get credit—all or nothing—for their written reflections.

I gradually introduced students to basic concepts of higher order thinking and the language of thinking. Students learned the thinking levels, based on Bloom (1956) and adapted in *Writer's INC* (Sebranek, Meyer, & Kemper, 1996); this hierarchy was kept in their notebooks and posted in the classroom. Occasionally, I provided students with brief exercises to identify and use higher order thinking in writing. About every two weeks, I introduced a short lesson on thinking skills and words, stressing their use in daily writing assignments. I incorporated reflective journal entry prompts to encourage the connections between students' personal experiences and the themes found in the reading assignment.

The texts for this English course included *The Catcher in the Rye*, "The Lottery," "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," an editorial on the driver's license process, selections from Jonathan Kozol's *Savage Inequalities*, *A Separate Peace*, and *A Raisin in the Sun*. The textual themes, to which students responded with personal reflections, included the following: personal dealings with racism, social class and its relation to schooling, private versus public schooling, concepts of friendship, and risk taking. I did not assess journals for grammar or formal sentence structure; therefore, students were free to write in a personal style.

Collection of the Data

At the end of the academic year, I asked all students to choose their eight "best" journal entries for both the first and second semesters. Students' "best" journal writing might be writing that they feel best demonstrates learning, thinking, and a personal reflection of their attitudes and classroom experiences. Students marked each selected journal entry, and I determined which ones met the standards for the study: enrollment throughout the academic year; a signed consent form from their parents; and indication of their "best" journal entries.

> *I incorporated reflective journal entry prompts to encourage the connections between students' personal experiences and the themes found in the reading assignment.*

Treatment of the Data

I assigned each journal a random letter for identification. Next, I coded the writing samples with the higher order thinking matrix. Writing samples were examined in a developmental method for the natural occurrences of higher order thinking at the close of the first semester; adjustments were made at the end of the year. *What* the students had written, and *how* they had written it affected the research. Finally, I coded the journal responses to fit general types of narrative content found within the journals. These narrative categories included: discussions of family relationships and structure (FA), friendships and relationships with other peers (FR), school and other activities (SA), commentary on school environment (SE), and critiques of various social conventions and mores (SC).

To study the variances of higher order thinking, I completed a close reading of 54 student journal entries, indicating those variances through the intersections of higher order thinking levels and the narrative content of each journal. Table 1 shows the frequency of thinking levels found within each narrative topic. From these results, I determined which narrative content suggested certain kinds of higher order thinking. The results displayed where higher order thinking levels might occur in future reflective journals on the same or similar narrative topics.

Results and Discussion

I studied the natural occurrence of higher order thinking in students' reflective journal entries. I collected and summarized all occurrences of higher order thinking based on the original matrix. Observations of the data revealed that higher order

Intersections of Higher Order Thinking and Narrative Topics within a Close Reading

Narr. Topic	# of entries	AP1 (%)	AP2 (%)	AP3 (%)	AN1 (%)	AN2 (%)	AN3 (%)	SY1 (%)	SY2 (%)	SY3 (%)	EV1 (%)	EV2 (%)	EV3 (%)
SC	30	73.3	10	0	13.3	36.6	20	6.7	3.3	6.7	23.3	0	6.7
SE	8	100	0	0	0	12.5	25	37.5	0	0	62.5	0	0
SA	3	100	0	0	33.3	66.7	0	0	0	0	66.7	0	0
FA	4	100	0	0	0	25	0	25	0	0	75	0	0
FR	9	100	11	0	11	33.3	11	33.3	0	0	33.3	0	0

Table 1.

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thinking did occur naturally throughout high school students' reflective journal entries. Students' writing provided evidence of higher order thinking at all four original levels of Bloom's (1956) taxonomy: application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. With specific regard to the matrix, students' journal entries displayed numerous occurrences of higher order thinking in 9 of the 12 possible sub-levels. Journal entries showed no evidence of thinking in levels AP3 (advanced organization skills) or EV2 (persuasion through concepts or prior knowledge). Instead, these reflective journals were stream-of-consciousness episodes. Students saturated their writing with application levels AP1 and AP2 in both semesters. They were able to connect prior knowledge with learned concepts, and connect those concepts with new material. Out of 48 possible data points, students displayed forms of application in 29 journals.

Reflective discourse was a dialectical act. I found high school students' reflective journals filled with thought and conversation. The writing was extremely analytical and controversial, with much room for extended higher order cognition. They followed Giroux's (1988) notions of reflection that describe both "personal biography and sedimented history" (p. 165). A close reading of students' journals displayed numerous occurrences of such cognition. These reflective journals also contained variances in how higher order thinking intersected with narrative topics within a natural history over an academic year.

Students used all levels of analysis throughout their journal entries. Students were able to separate ideas, categorize those ideas, and then compare or contrast them. As with application, students did not necessarily move linearly (from the lowest to highest levels of analysis) within their journal entries. Instead, students compared or contrasted ideas without categorizing them first. Students also moved from categorization to comparison without first separating the ideas for their reader. The study also showed that students used all levels of synthesis in their reflective journals. During the first semester, no student used SY2 (combining individual ideas into complex concepts) but there were frequent occurrences of SY1 (anticipating future actions based on learned concepts or prior knowledge) during both semesters. There were only minor incidents of SY3 (creating new complex concepts based on individual ideas). As before, students did not use synthesis in an ordered or hierarchical manner. Finally, I found that students used evaluation levels of EV1 (judging learned concepts or prior knowledge) and EV3 (recommending change to these concepts) throughout the academic year. Students did not use EV2 (persuading readers with these concepts or knowledge). Instead, journals described acts of judgment, and to a lesser extent, acts of assessment.

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Conclusions

High school students' reflective journals contained many sites of higher order thinking. In addition, an examination of how narrative topics intersected with these thinking levels provided evidence that certain journal topics might promote specific cognitive reactions. When students wrote on topics of family and friends, their passages were more personal and contained more complex sentence structure. In turn, these journal entries contained equal amounts of synthesis, analysis, and evaluation. Topics that described school activities and school environment were less candid and contained varied sentence structure. These journal entries included high levels of evaluation and varied levels of synthesis and analysis. Finally, entries that described social conventions were the least personal, sometimes appearing removed from personal experience or identification. These journals contained a variety of thinking levels, but none as strong as the previous narrative topics. The many and varied occurrences of higher order thinking throughout these journals revealed that a natural and developmental history of reflective writing includes all of Bloom's higher order thinking levels.

Further, this study revealed that such journal writing includes 10 out of the 12 possible thinking levels found on my assessment matrix. Students did not incorporate AP3 and EV2 levels of thinking. Instead, student journals were comprised of stream-of-consciousness thinking that moved from one point to the next, without regard to chronology or form and with little interest in whether another reader agreed or disagreed with their opinions. This fluid nature of the journals did not lessen their cognitive value, but instead allowed the writers to construct more candid and thoughtful discourses.

This study illuminates that reflective journals include many instances of higher order thinking throughout various narrative topics. These journals act as windows into students' personal experiences. They also allow students to connect with the texts they read in class. However, teachers can use them beyond simple reflec-

tion and personal connections. Using the assessment matrix, this study provided evidence that reflective journals contain many levels of cognition.

Implications

Teachers should view reflective journals as more than something that fills instructional time. Instead, this writing should reflect Newkirk's (1997) notion of "composition as cultural studies" (p. 88). In this sense, students create, define, and redefine their histories around the texts they read. Journals are a direct connection to a student's personal beliefs. Teachers who implement reflective journal writing in their classrooms might be better able to gauge the success of the texts they teach. Reflective writing provides students with a means to express their beliefs and their thoughts-in-progress in a safe forum that does not rely on traditional notions of grading and evaluation. Rather, reflective journals become constantly changing sites of cognitive activity where students can always redefine and refine their learning.

Such beliefs echo Aronowitz and Giroux (1991), who have noted that student voice must include "the ways in which students produce meaning through the various subject positions that are available to them in the wider society" (p. 100). Reflective journal writing creates this kind of student voice. It is a form that challenges conventional rules of autobiography (McLaren, 1995). Finally, reflective journals exhibit Foucault's (1988) characteristics of "care of the self," where students do not write merely to confess, but also write to learn more about themselves and the world in which they live. This ethic of self-care and the emphasis it places on constant learning make reflective journals an essential tool in progressive educational practices.

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Hands-On Thinking and Learning: A Hands-Down Favorite

Karen Schramm, Delaware Valley College, Doylestown, Pennsylvania

When asked what they particularly value about a worthwhile course, students frequently exclaim, "Hands-on learning!" Perhaps they are dangling from a tree-harness, searching for diseased portions of a tree to prune; they might be inspecting a cow's udder for signs of mastitis; perchance they are demonstrating dressage, testing the moisture content of a bale of hay, interacting with preschoolers for a psychology project, or interviewing successful corporate-types for a business studies course. In every instance, they find themselves fully engaged in the task at hand. Little possibility exists of remaining passive and disconnected from the learning process when the focus is on action.

By contrast, students in a composition class often expect to simply sit back and "absorb" the "dead, dry facts" of English. They tend to believe that no thinking should be involved. Typically, no keen sense of adventure lurks behind required courses such as English 1, where students feel utterly "boxed in." No wonder English Comp is so seldom cherished, or that students don't give it their complete attention. When faced with a thinking-oriented task, such as analyzing an article from the textbook, their eyes glaze over and their fingers strum anxiously. Why can't the assignment be hands-on?

Of course, in some sense, it is: A good article contains a "tactile" quality. Issues are extracted, weighed, and validated or rejected; positions are presented, complete with details that describe, situate, and articulate viewpoints in our culture. Effective communication requires a firm cognitive grasp of the issue, on both the author's and the audience's part. Yet that "tactile" truth may not be readily apparent to an enviro-sci major returning fresh from an invigorating trek in a swamp, or to a veterinary student coming from the kennel where a favorite dog has whelped. English generally doesn't create that sense of immediacy, of blissful immersion in the quest for knowledge.

I seek to imbue my students with a sense of adventure, to create a pedagogical space in which they may freely explore the rich treasures of the language arts.

I seek to imbue my students with a sense of adventure, to create a pedagogical space in which they may freely explore the rich treasures of the language arts. To motivate them to grapple with ideas and effective expression, I introduce them to the Definition Project. Dividing the class into groups of 3–5 people, I hand each group an object that is unusual and thought-provoking. I ask them to examine the item and determine its identity, its purpose, and alternative uses for it.

Objects have included the following:

1) Pop-open woven material
2) Long, thin, flexible rubber item
3) Pocket-sized shiny material
4) 2-piece plastic tube with ribbing
5) Lighted orange plastic device

The first is protective netting to cover foods. The second is a "Grip-Stick" used to tie items onto a backpack. The third opens out into a full-size emergency blanket. The fourth is a deer-calling device, and the fifth is a mini-light that attaches to a screwdriver to help the user see.

Students enjoy handling and contemplating these odd items, and their pleasure comes through loud and clear. Since they have never seen the object before, they let their imagi-

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nations run free, exploring the possibilities. For instance, the Grip-Stick particularly intrigues them, and they arrive at numerous potential uses for it: a hair-setting device, a piece of exercise equipment, a pointer for presentations, a surgical instrument. This dynamic approach stimulates the class as they "think outside the box" of ordinary English courses. Released from the boring notion that English represents a terminal case of sensory deprivation, the groups "come alive" as the objects appeal to their senses and activate their minds. The group with the deer-caller delights in blowing through the tube, producing funny loud noises; the group with the screwdriver light starts winking like a firefly; and the group with the food netting pops open the mesh like a mini-parachute. Who says English can't be fun?

Yet there is an eminently practical side to this hands-on project: it fosters careful thinking and leads naturally to lively class discussions of the issues connected with the objects. For example, examination of the deer-calling device segues into an exploration of the legitimacy of hunting and to the highly debated issue of gun control. That, in turn, can lead smoothly into an analysis of the assigned textbook articles on firearms. This pedagogical fluidity simultaneously accomplishes several goals.

Two important features of English Composition courses are: 1) the need for clear "usability" and 2) their wide-ranging cross-curricular quality. "Usability," an industry term for a key factor in effective product design, is a measure of how successfully a user can interact with a product, such as a control panel. Research aims to produce items that prove efficient and user-friendly (Porter, Sullivan, Blythe, Grabill, & Miles, 2000). Unfortunately, students do not always quite grasp the point of taking college composition courses: How will such courses add value to their curriculum? How will these courses expand their minds? What usable, transferable skills will these courses provide? Successful teachers demonstrate the usability of composition classes not so much by presenting "skills and drills" lessons, which research has shown to be largely ineffectual (Bacon, 2000), but by introducing germane issues that connect the learner to both the "real world" and to specific disciplines.

This linkage supports composition's cross-curricular quality. English appropriates and accommodates material from myriad disciplines in pedagogically rich ways. When we delve into significant issues, students often discover a rewarding connection to their own chosen course of study. In discussions of gun control, Criminal Justice students offer unique insights. When we focus on the food netting, biology and food-science majors provide helpful advice about food safety. By integrating their "content area" knowledge into the English classroom, students enrich the course. In turn, when they mention something interesting learned in English during another course, a productive cross-pollination occurs.

Yet there is an eminently practical side to this hands-on project: it fosters careful thinking and leads naturally to lively class discussions of the issues connected with the objects.

My students relish the opportunity for dynamic "hands-on" thinking and learning, and they produce thoughtful, finely detailed definitions of their objects. Everyone in the group gets involved, camaraderie flourishes, and the class eagerly applies that strategy of close inspection to the textbook articles as they employ authorial tactics to locate key textual "objects" and extract the articles' main features and purposes. Clearly, the Definition Project passes the test of usability, helping my students to "get a feel for" the authors' thesis and rhetorical strategies as they consider the "size," "shape," "color," and "texture," if you will, of the issue at hand.

To complete the project, students compose a paragraph highlighting their textual findings. The Definition Project encourages them to think and to link. No longer is English perceived as a formless entity—required, but resisted. In their creative hands, my students mix several choice ingredients, blending them like a baker kneads bread. Reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, representing, and reflecting on the assignment are all kneaded (and needed!) in an effective English classroom.

A few well-chosen objects open up whole new vistas of opportunity for exploration and discovery. I vary the items each semester, to keep the approach fresh. Since objects possess not only literal but also valuable metaphoric qualities, the potential for fruitful course application is as great as students' imaginations.

For its engaging approach to education, hands-on thinking and learning is a hands-down favorite. When the class period ends, my students enter the hallways still animatedly discussing their group projects. Sensing their excitement, various professors and students inquire, "What class was that?" When my students enthusiastically respond, "English Comp!" questioners are amazed and pleased. After all, when was the last time you saw students leaving an English class smiling?

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So, Why Not Write?

Hongliang Zhang, Zibo Experimental Middle School, Zibo Shandong, China

Teachers are continuous and lifelong learners. Their knowledge of their subjects and of the crafts of teaching evolves throughout their lifetime. But this is not enough. Teachers in the twenty-first century should also be experts. One of the effective ways to make the transition from "teacher as learner" to "teacher as expert" is to learn to write for publication.

Writing is mind traveling, and traveling, by its very nature, includes detours, wrong turns, and repeat visits. Writing never follows a straight path, so, just as you do before a trip, set a clear, specific destination that will motivate and guide you. It's hard to finish any piece of writing if you don't understand what's motivating you to write. Your goals will motivate you even more if you put a time limit on your objectives.

A journey of 1,000 miles begins with the first step, and writing begins with your own writing. One major obstacle is finding the time to write. For many teachers, lack of time is probably the most significant reason for not writing for publication. However, it's never too late to get started. Today would be a good time. Schedule it like any other responsibility, and don't be afraid to start. Your writing improves if you write often and much, so write every day.

An article starts with an idea. Begin with what you know or what you like. Be confident. You are sure to have learned things in your life experiences that would help others, and it's those personal experiences that you understand best. Jot down your successes and your concerns. These reflections may serve as springboards for important ideas and writing; later, by integrating your teaching experience with theories about teaching and learning, you could develop a longer piece of writing.

At first, this may be harder than you expected. When you can't find the right words, make lists or outlines about your idea. If you need more information, go to the library. Read books, magazines, and newspapers on your topic; take notes, and write, read, and rewrite. Be prepared to rewrite your draft many times. Rewriting is a necessary part of writing. While rewriting, consider your audience. Shine up your thoughts by replacing dull words with more precise wording. Add interesting facts from current publications to keep your writing fresh. Investing time at this stage always results in a more polished product.

When you finish your draft, share it; try to get friendly and helpful feedback. You can have several colleagues read it and make suggestions. Ask them specifically if some parts are unclear or redundant or if the writing can be improved in some way. Other suggestions or points of view may help clarify your thinking and make your writing more comprehensible to readers.

Here are a few other basic suggestions to help you write better and faster. How-to books on writing offer suggestions and strategies that might prevent you from taking detours or wrong turns, and, more important, help you to see the forest for the trees. Attending a writers' conference or workshop might extend your thinking. I've also found that joining or starting a writers' group of trusted friends for feedback and support is invaluable.

Ernest Hemingway once said "easy writing makes hard reading." It is important to read, to search, and to research. Everyone has "aha" experiences while reading, and words flow if you have a solid knowledge base. Some of the best content for articles comes from reading, but, more important, it cultivates thinking about ideas for your next article.

Mind traveling has no destination. When you write, you are often involved in uncharted thinking and exploring. You might be searching for the perfect idea to tie all your main points together. Eventually, you will come to organize, support, and present your points so well that your peers will find it difficult to disagree with or question what you have written. Through the act of writing, you are simultaneously learning about your subject and becoming an expert teacher; at the same time, your publications will help others to become experts as well.

Book Reviews

Get Organized, Get Published

Don Aslett and Carol Cartaino. 2001. Writers Digest Books (1507 Dana Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45207, USA). ISBN 1-58297-003-3. Hardcover. 290 pp. US$18.99.

Reviewed by Bonita Wilcox, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, Edinboro

In *Crafting a Life in Essay, Story, Poem* (1996), Donald Murray writes about writers who don't write. He lists their excuses—no time, no talent, nothing worth saying, not creative, don't know how, too old, etc. But the excuse that really caught my eye was, "I have responsibilities to other people." This seemed like a valid excuse to me, mostly because it is one that I often use. Murray's response to this excuse was, "And we will be better at all our other roles in life if we fulfill the responsibilities we

have to ourselves" (p.14). When it comes to advice about writing, Donald Murray is the expert. I knew I wouldn't be able to use "others" as an excuse anymore. This is why I read *Get Organized, Get Published: 225 Ways to Make Time for Success*, so I could find more time to spend on my writing.

We all have responsibilities to other people, and many of us dream of having more time for ourselves. Unfortunately, time is constant; we have only 24 hours every day. We cannot make more if we need it, but we can learn to use it more efficiently. The secret of time management, according to many professional writers, is to "maximize your minutes." With a little help from this book by Aslett and Cartaino, we can learn to self-monitor, manage, and organize our lives. We don't have to give up our responsibilities to others in order to have time to write. The authors tell us that organization is liberating!

Most books about writing for publication begin with the basics on how to get started. Few focus, as these authors do, on how to organize a writing life, and they speak from personal experience. If you are a novice writer, they will show you how to organize raw materials. If you are a more proficient writer, they will show you how to organize your research. If you are a professional writer, they will show you how to market your writing projects. They do this with simple language in a conversational tone, allowing the reader to move quickly through the text. Before you know it, the authors take you from initial planning to a master plan, through clutter control to time management tips.

Still, as I searched the text to find some words of wisdom and advice for those readers needing a good book on writing, I realized that I had hardly responded in the usual ways with my highlighter or my pen. I had few underlined paragraphs, no questions or comments, and no circles or stars to emphasize ideas. I tried to draw a visual of the text to get a "big picture," and I ended up with chapter titles in little boxes. What is this book really saying to me? I wondered. Then I began to floss and brush the words of advice and inspiration out of my brain, and I thought more about the liberating aspects of organization and having "free" time to write.

The one quotation from the text that I had recorded in my journal was this one. "Believe it or not, keeping moving in writing is even more important than getting started. Many would-be writers do finally manage to overcome that first big hurdle of getting started, but then they never get published because they don't keep going" (p. 209). So, if you are one of those "writers who don't write" that Donald Murray mentions, and your favorite excuse relates to time management, perhaps you should read *Get Organized, Get Published: 225 Ways to Make Time for Success*, a book dedicated to all those who should write, in hopes that they will.

Murray, D. M. (1996). *Crafting a Life in Essay, Story, Poem*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Beachem's Sourcebooks: Exploring Harry Potter

Elisabeth Schafer. 2000. Beachem Publishing (P.O. Box 830, Osprey, FL 34229, USA). ISBN 0-93383-357-1. Hardcover. 479 pp. US$22.95.

Reviewed by Megan E. Moon, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, Edinboro

Have you ever wondered if it were possible to overanalyze a book or a series of books? Well, after reading *Exploring Harry Potter* by Elizabeth D. Schafer, I assure you that it is. As a fan of the *Harry Potter* series, I was drawn to this book as I walked through Borders a few weeks ago. It was listed as a guide to help teachers explore and use the *Harry Potter* series in their classrooms. I couldn't resist.

There are seven sections to this easy-to-follow book, including an introduction, "Beginnings," "Reading Harry," "Teaching Harry," "While You're Waiting for the Next *Harry Potter* Novel," "Bibliography and Appendices," and "Online Resources."

"Beginnings" offers a biography of J. K. Rowling that the author pieced together from various interviews and articles. She also describes a phenomenon she's dubbed *Pottermania* and delves into *Harry*'s appeal to people of all ages, races, genders, and backgrounds. The author goes on to discuss the fame that the series has achieved; the toys, movies, and collector's items related to the series; the various translations (over 28 languages worldwide); and the diversity of the fans. Also addressed are some of *Harry*'s detractors and controversies, including the Whitbread Prize Controversy of 2000. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* won the Whitbread Prize, a prestigious British Literature Award, challenging Seamus Heaney's new translation of *Beowulf*. Some scholars argued that these books were in no way comparable, and that the Potter book should be thrown out of the running because it was not a great reflection of literature. Supporters of *Harry Potter* rallied that it was a legitimate piece of literature, and that it should be considered. The results of this controversy are explained in greater detail in the book.

"Reading Harry" is considerably longer than "Beginnings." It deals with the cast of the books, the setting, Harry vs. Voldemort, Harry as the "traditional" hero, and Harry's friendships. It also discusses Harry's family—both his parents and the Dursleys, the evil aunt, uncle, and cousin with whom he lived after his parents were killed. The setting, structure, lifestyle, and traditions of Hogwarts are analyzed by Schafer to help explain how the school operates. She also analyzes the "real" places in London that Rowling refers to in her series. The game of Quidditch is discussed in this chapter, along with some comparison to "Muggle" sports that are similar to Quidditch. Schafer also takes the time to discuss the

history of magic, the literary qualities of the book, the language and humor that Rowling so magically weaves into her writing, and moral and social codes of society that have made *Harry* a controversy for some people.

"Teaching Harry" is the most useful section for teachers. It includes lesson plan ideas and project ideas for the first three *Harry Potter* books in the series. This book was published before the fourth book, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, was published. Each lesson includes sections on chapter development, projects and ideas, discussion ideas, and activities to develop writing and critical skills. There is also a very well-designed and well-researched timeline of *Harry Potter*, which includes references to actual historical events that would have affected the novel. If used with the article by Christal Ferrandino, "Our *Harry Potter* Club" (which appeared in the journal *Teaching K–8*, 2000), teachers could develop activities not only for their classrooms, but for the whole school. Another article that teachers could use to get a whole school involved in the series is "Deconstructing Harry" by Pamela Greene (2000).

"While You're Waiting for the Next *Harry Potter* Novel" shares ideas about similar and related titles that might engage the young reader's desire to keep reading. This section of the book, combined with the article "Beyond Harry" by Eva Mitnick (2000), would be an excellent resource for teachers or librarians who are trying to find alternative books for the students who are clamoring for the release of the next *Harry Potter* book. Since book five isn't expected until the summer of 2002, teachers may find more and more students trying to find books that are "as good as *Harry*," and teachers may find themselves somewhat frazzled.

"Bibliography and Appendices" offers a good resource for more information about topics related to the series, such as Web sites, information on characters and the meanings of their names, unnamed characters, mythical and legendary characters that parallel characters in the series, and information sources about J. K. Rowling.

Although the book would definitely be useful to teachers who want to incorporate the series into their classrooms, it is filled with superfluous, often redundant, details that only take up room. Fans of the series, eager to get their hands on anything related to it, may be disappointed, becoming bored or even upset about some of the conclusions. In addition, it was published before *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (book four) was released, rendering it quickly out of date.

Nonetheless, there were some very interesting and valuable elements, such as the timeline added by Schafer and the comparison of traditional literature with the series. I personally enjoyed the comparison between some of Rowling's characters and certain mythical and legendary characters. Schafer's book offers a guide for those serious about teaching the *Harry Potter* books. I would recommend it to the teacher who is willing to spend a lot of time studying the topic, or one who isn't very familiar with the series.

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One Size Fits Few

Susan Ohanian. 1999. Heinemann (361 Hanover Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801-3912, USA). ISBN 0-325-00158-8. Softcover. 154 pp. US$16.00.

Reviewed by Rick Chambers, Ontario College of Teachers, Toronto

In an era when education policy appears to be dictated by public opinion polls, Susan Ohanian's book, *One Size Fits Few*, is entertaining and informative reading. Railing against the American (and increasingly Canadian) obsession with content standards and state-mandated curriculum, Ohanian urges teachers not to lose sight of their calling "to nurture the children in our care."

Standardized content and curriculum, according to Ohanian, are parts of an agenda foisted on the educational community and society at large by the corporate business elite and their political cronies. Their interest is not the child, the community, social consciousness, or well-rounded citizens. "Standardistos talk in universe-speak, using such cosmic terms as *all workers, children as future workers, global economy, world-class skills, world-class children*. But when they get the phonemes and the math facts all lined up in neat and tidy rows, what Standardistos really offer is a classroom universe of narrow isolationism" (p. 13). She goes on to say, "politicians, corporate leaders, media pundits, and education entrepreneurs don't talk about compassion, about caring, about creativity, initiative, self-reliance, or myriad other qualities that we must nurture in our students" (p. 27).

With chapter headings like, "And God said, 'Let There Be Phonemic Awareness'" and "Californication," Ohanian skewers state-mandated curriculum expectations all the while pointing fingers at political and corporate agendas. "All this just goes to prove that when politicians sit down at an education summit table, count the forks" (p. 109).

"The fiery rhetoric filling corporate boardrooms and newspaper editorials just goes to prove that where there's smoke, there's smoke" (p. 109). To illustrate the point, she uses Louis V. Gerstner, CEO of IBM, as her example. "Gerstner is a guy with plenty of advice for teachers. . . . In *Reinventing Education*, Gerstner preaches to teachers, 'Know what your job is; know what your outcomes should be; know how you will measure output.'

Measuring output, now there's a notion on which to build a teaching career. Maybe it's my background as a third-grade teacher, but I've never been able to embrace 'output.' You mop up a lot of output in grade three" (p. 111). Ohanian reminds readers that when Gerstner left RJR Nabisco to go to IBM, he arrived with a five million dollar signing bonus. Almost immediately, he fired 90,000 of the company's 270,000 employees, "the same kind of highly-trained workers he insists the schools aren't producing" (p. 110).

Following the where-there's-smoke-there's-smoke theory, Ohanian points to the real reasons why politicians focus on content standards: "Yammering about standards, of course, has a political purpose: It shifts responsibility and perpetrates a fraud. Instead of looking at issues of poverty, teen pregnancy, drug use, violence, and the safeguarding of children, our leaders say, 'Let's prove we have standards by giving a test'" (p. 116). She says that, like Joseph McCarthy, they "point to the unnamed dastardly creatures who are bringing the country to the brink of disaster. In the old days, we were going to make the country safe for democracy by instituting loyalty oaths. These days, we'll do it by testing kids and testing their teachers, too" (p. 5).

Reflecting on her 20 years as a teacher, Ohanian reminds us of the individual children we have all known, the ones who don't fit into any prepackaged, prescribed lists of conditions or grade-specific expectations. She tells the stories of real classrooms with real children. "It is our strength as teachers that we are empathetic people; we try to walk in the shoes of our students. We must nurture this quality, fighting off all attempts of Standardisto baboons to strip it away. John Kenneth Galbraith once observed, 'If all economists were laid end-to-end, it would be a good thing.' That's an apt formula for Standardistos," too (p. 127).

CEL Adopts Vision Statement

The Conference on English Leadership has articulated a vision that describes the many responsibilities, interests, and roles of its members. At a retreat in Fort Collins in August 2000, the CEL executive board spent considerable time developing the vision. It was circulated during the fall in a broader consultation for input and suggestions. At the November executive board meeting, the draft was endorsed and further consultation with members was suggested. Over the winter, the vision was placed on the CEL Web site (www.coedu.usf.edu/cel/board.htm) for comment. At a meeting in Birmingham in March 2001, the CEL executive board passed a motion to adopt the vision.

The vision will guide the executive committee, program chairs, and session presenters at the fall CEL convention and the CEL-sponsored sessions at the spring NCTE conference, editors of the *English Leadership Quarterly* and monographs, and Web page contributors as they develop programs and materials for CEL members. The vision will be revised periodically to accurately reflect members' responsibilities.

Teachers of English and language arts who find themselves reflected in some or all of the descriptors in the vision are encouraged and welcomed to join CEL.

Conference on English Leadership Vision

The Conference on English Leadership (CEL) is a collaborative, dynamic, discussion-based forum for English language arts leaders to explore current and emerging issues.

CEL members assume leadership roles in English language arts, requiring them to address many of the following challenges:

- synthesize emerging research and information for others;
- analyze and articulate complex issues, policy directives, and reform initiatives;
- predict trends in the profession;
- initiate and expedite necessary change;
- plan and organize curricular and professional development;
- mentor new teachers and potential leaders;
- encourage leadership capacity in others;
- affirm and validate colleagues;
- communicate rationale related to English language arts programming;
- supervise the business of English language arts, including budgets, schedules, and evaluation of personnel, programs, and policies;
- collaborate with individuals at all levels of responsibility;
- develop networks of informed colleagues.

English language arts leaders are cordially invited to join the CEL conversation.

Call for Manuscripts—Future Issues

The *English Leadership Quarterly*, a publication of the NCTE Conference on English Leadership (CEL), seeks articles of 500–5,000 words on topics of interest to those in positions of leadership in departments (elementary, secondary, or college) where English is taught. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are always welcomed. Software reviews and book reviews related to the themes of upcoming issues are encouraged.

A decision about a manuscript will be reached within two months of submission. The *Quarterly* typically publishes one out of ten manuscripts it receives each year.

Surveys of our readers reveal these topics of interest: leadership studies, class size/class load, support from the business community, at-risk student programs, integrated learning, problems of rural schools, and the whole language curriculum philosophy. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In particular, upcoming issues will have these themes:

February 2002 (deadline October 15, 2001)
Alternative Assessment

April 2002 (deadline December 30, 2001)
Teachers as Researchers

August 2002 (deadline April 16, 2002)
Leadership and Literacy (see call, p. 4)

Manuscripts may be sent on 3.5" floppy disks with IBM-compatible ASCII files, or as traditional double-spaced typed copy. Address articles and inquiries to Bonita Wilcox at Miller Research Learning Center, Room 111, Edinboro, PA 16444; e-mail: bwilcox@ edinboro.edu; phone: (814) 398-2528. ●

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▶ IN THIS ISSUE

All about Journaling

Bonita L. Wilcox, editor

When I started school, we didn't have journals, but by grade 3, some of us did have diaries to record our hopes, dreams, happenings, and feelings. In college, I learned that taking accurate notes in my journal and memorizing them resulted in survival. In my early years as an English teacher, I encouraged students to keep journals for note taking, but I stayed as far away from the diary as possible. In graduate school, I became a journal keeper, and through journaling I began to understand that "writing involves ideas, emotions, and language that changes recursively over time, through recording, adding, deleting, substituting, and reconceptualizing" (Gallehr, 1994, p.23). My journal shelf holds a history of what I have read, thought, and understood, but these journals also contain my feelings, emotions, intuitions, beliefs, and attitudes. "Real cognizing occurs harmonically, at all octaves of our being—physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual" (Moffett, 1994, p. xi).

In the '80s, whole language and writing-across-the curriculum became popular topics, and nearly every teacher required that students keep journals. Many students carried six journals, most of which contained notes from lectures and assigned readings. Many of the students would sit down the night before journals were due with a variety of writing instruments to quickly fulfill the journal-writing requirement. Usually, the journals were corrected, evaluated, or just given points at the end of each term. Some teachers required neatness, some wanted accuracy, and others counted pages, but most of us wanted the journals to go beyond recording to show evidence of thinking and learning.

The concept of "writing to learn" flourished in the '90s, and teachers searched for strategies to make thinking visible through journal writing. My favorite books included Murray's *Write to Learn* (1984), Elbow's *Embracing Contraries* (1986), and Fulwiler's *The Journal Book* (1987) and *Teaching with Writing* (1987). Later publications, *Learning Journals in the K–8 Classroom* (Popp, 1997), *Moon Journals* (Chancer and Rester-Zodrow, 1997), *Journals in the Classroom: Writing to Learn* (Anson and Beach, 1995), and *Going Bohemian* (Baines and Kunkel, 2000), offered specific strategies and prompts to promote thinking and learning through journal writing.

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In the introduction to *Teaching Writing as Reflective Practice* (1995), Hillocks wrote, "writing cannot be disconnected from its sources, the processes of observation, interpretation, imagination, and inquiry without which writing must remain little more than a tool for copying what has already been thought" (p. xvii). Still, Moffett saw it differently, "Outside, people write from desire and fear, imagery and impulse, recollection and reflection, expertise and authority, stillness and suspension. They write to work up and work through, to find out and break out, to show and let know, to prove to others and to improve themselves" (Moffett, 1994, p. xii).

In an article entitled "Teaching

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Thinking and Writing for a New Century" (2001), Johannessen asks the question, "How can we design writing instruction to help students develop the tools they need to solve complex, unfamiliar problems; think for themselves; act independently and with others; discern the proper course of action in situations that are ambiguous; and understand a variety of perspectives? This issue of the *Quarterly* has many suggestions for doing just that: Allison Smith writes about the benefits of journaling; Kate McFarland's research piece offers many useful resources for using multicultural dialogue journals; Kay McSpadden suggests that the key to teaching creative writing is sharing; and finally, there are two book reviews, one on private writing and the other on scholarly writing. ●

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Journaling to Become a Better Writer: Why Journals Work

Allison D. Smith, assistant professor of English, Louisiana Tech University

To write in a journal is a therapeutic strategy often used in psychology because it provides a mechanism for deep thinking and self-reflection. Using journal writing in the classroom provides students with this same mechanism and also provides other benefits directly related to learning how to think, read, and write more effectively. As a former high school teacher and the current director of a university writing program, I have used journal writing with all my students at all levels, ranging from freshman in basic writing classes to graduate students and experienced teachers in composition methodology courses. The means for assigning and evaluating journal writing may change from class to class, but my reasons for using journals do not. Having students write informally in journals expands what I can accomplish in all my courses.

Journals Help Students Think

New concepts in any class should be intellectually challenging and conducive to deep thinking and reflection. In a basic writing class, understanding the main idea of a paragraph

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might be the challenge; in an advanced methodology course, understanding the theoretical underpinnings of certain teaching models might be the challenge. Either way, students need to be stimulated by new concepts and new experiences. Using journal writing is an effective way to allow them to process this new information and mull over their reactions to it. Instead of listening and forgetting, students can immediately process new information; this triggers higher-level cognitive skills more than memorization of facts and forms could ever do.

Journals Help Students Discover
Students who are allowed to write informally, as well as formally, are allowed the time to interact with new ideas or literary works before being expected to be experts in their more formalized academic writing. Journal writing is an intermediary between speech and writing; its informal nature allows students to, in effect, write speech. In journaling, students are given the opportunity to talk to themselves, the text, the teacher, the assignment, or whatever other audience helps them interact with and personally discover the new ideas they are attempting to process. Emig (1977) uses the metaphorical term "discovery" to describe this integral part of the reading, learning, and writing processes. However, this discovery process not only includes thinking about new concepts, it is also a way for students to reflect on themselves and use this self-knowledge to help process new information. Discovery through journaling can occur at any level. For a description of how journaling can help student teachers discover themselves as teachers, see Pears and Blystone (2000).

Journals Support Individualized Learning Styles
Journals allow students to process information based on their individual learning styles. Student interaction with text does not occur in a vacuum. My students are free to add pictures or doodles, or refer to the music they are listening to, the food they are eating, the room where they are writing. Students respond to texts that are immediately available to them—no memorization necessary. They can also refer to outside sources at any time, including dictionaries, encyclopedias, friends, Web sites, and so on. Allowing for such a personalized digestion of new information supports the multiple intelligences of our students, a focus that is often missing in the traditional classroom (Gardner, 2000).

In journaling, students are given the opportunity to talk to themselves, the text, the teacher, the assignment, or whatever other audience helps them interact with and personally discover the new ideas they are attempting to process.

Journals Help Students Become Motivated to Do Reading Assignments
I use journals as a means of confirming that my students have done their assigned reading. Each reading assignment requires a journal reaction that is checked at the beginning of class. Students must be in class and have a journal to receive credit. For the first few minutes of class, students bring their journals to the front of the class, and I check for completion based on the journaling requirements (usually two filled single-spaced notebook pages). I do not read them at this time; I just mark a check in my grade book. This process also helps the class settle down, and it saves me from taking attendance. Students have to speak up or be marked absent, and this confession in front of their peers that they are not prepared for class is extremely motivating for students to do both the reading and the journals.

I offer my students journaling instead of reading quizzes or tests; as long as students take the journal writing seriously, I promise not to give any reading quiz or test. Each time I give this promise, the students cheer, most of them motivated to do the reading journals in order to avoid a test. At the end of the quarter, I collect a folder of each student's work, collated, annotated, and presented to me with a final journal entry in which they evaluate their work in the class based on a set of questions I hand out. Students receive a grade based on the ratio of journal entries completed to journal entries assigned. Sometimes, the journal grade is part of the class participation grade, and sometimes it stands alone as a component of class evaluation. Either way, a concrete grade for the journal reactions motivates students to read, think, and respond in a timely fashion.

Journals Encourage Students to See the Reading/Writing Connection
Students readily see the connection between speaking and listening because they have been experienced conversationalists since they acquired speech. The give-and-take of a conversation and the knowledge of acceptable conversational markers and feedback loops are acquired early by all children. However, writing and reading are learned, not acquired, and are often treated as disconnected behaviors by parents and schools. Journaling highlights the connection between reading and writing, allowing students to "converse" with the text (Fulwiler, 1987). The more experience they have with this conversation, the more natural reading and writing become.

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Journals Help Students See Audience and Purpose

Journals also help students learn about the importance of audience and purpose, two aspects of writing that are frequently forgotten as students write formal academic papers. Writing a journal in reaction to another piece of writing allows students to dissect the intentions of the author and to evaluate the effectiveness of the language the author uses to interest his or her audience or to achieve a particular purpose. Students need to become aware that successful writers fictionalize their audiences, analyzing and inventing who the reader is (Ede and Lunsford, 1984). In their journals, my students often praise other authors for knowing just the right words to use to capture the audience, and I have had students denigrate textbook authors for their ignorance of the student reader. Having an apparatus that allows for such investigation and evaluation means that students are apt to think more deeply about the why and how of a reading assignment and not just the content of the piece.

Journals Prepare Students for Class and Group Discussions

Teachers assign readings in a writing class to help students come up with ideas for paper assignments. However, reading alone is frequently not enough to stimulate creative ideas and interesting papers. Most writing teachers ask students to participate in group or class discussion in order to help them brainstorm content, topic, thesis, supporting details, and organization. Students who are well prepared for these discussions will benefit the most from this type of activity.

Even though group discussion can be an effective classroom tool, it is easy for groups to bog down if the students are not prepared to focus on the assigned discussion. We all know students who can talk on anything—journals help these students focus on the reading and shape their comments. For those who shake in their boots when called upon in class, journals act as a crutch, enabling reluctant students to share their opinions. In classes where my students are encountering very new ideas or material, I give a list of questions that they use to write their journals. This helps highlight what will be covered in the next class discussion, focuses students in their reading, and helps me prepare for the next class in advance. I find this technique extremely beneficial when I teach literary analysis, film analysis, and linguistics—new ideas that are sometimes difficult for students to grasp.

One of the most discouraging things about having a writing assignment due is not having any writing done; journaling is empowering because it provides the raw material to get started.

Journals Help Relieve Writing Anxiety

Journal writing is usually the precursor to more formalized academic papers, which are difficult for most writers to begin without some prewriting activity. One of the most discouraging things about having a writing assignment due is not having any writing *done*; journaling is empowering because it provides the raw material to get started. Students get "warmed up"—to their writing and to the topic. As Elbow (1998) confirms, "writing a lot at the beginning is also important because that's when [students] are least warmed up and most anxious" (p. 27). Journal assignments that allow students to write without having to worry about grammar or mechanics also relieve anxiety; students are able to focus on global issues like content instead of local editing ones that may disturb the flow of thought.

Journals Let Students Practice Their Writing Craft

Students need to write to improve their writing, and it is a given that all effective writing classes have students write. However, incorporating journal writing into a class augments the writing load, giving students even more opportunities to play with form, words, ideas. Informal writing in journals also provides those students who are underprepared for academic writing (those commonly labeled basic writers or ESL writers) a chance to practice encoding their thoughts into writing in a less stressful writing situation. Bartholomae (2000), among others, advocates improving student writing through the analysis of error and the development of writing activities that allow students to practice encoding the visual symbols of written language outside the actual composing process. Finding patterns of errors in a student's writing allows the teacher to be more helpful and less critical. Journals provide just such an opportunity.

Journals Help Students Find Their Unique Voice

When students know they can respond personally in the positive or negative to the new concepts they encounter and that their honest and real response is what is called for in a journal entry, they are encouraged to develop their own voice. Formal academic assignments can encourage students to take on distant voices. We have all read papers that would be deemed perfect with regard to form and content, but the academic environment resulted in the loss of the student's own unique voice. When there is a real connection between the writer and the reader, this gives way to the papers teachers enjoy reading. Elbow (2000) believes that the more students write, the more their own "audible, dramatic, distinctive, authoritative, and reso-

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nant voice" will come out in their writing (p. 218). Journaling allows students to find their own unique voice and to experiment with using language that brings that voice to the reader.

Journals provide immense benefits to students, but instructors who incorporate journal writing into their teaching also profit. Using journals to motivate students and confirm that they are doing their reading has more immeasurable benefits for me than any other single pedagogical strategy that I have tried. My students are active participants in the class community. They read actively, participate in class discussions energetically, and are prepared for formal writing assignments. I do not become depressed because students have not done the reading prior to class discussion; my students do read. I do not become disheartened because students demonstrate their lack of reading by failing simple discrete-point reading quizzes; my students show they know the material through their journal writing and class discussions. I do not spend time outside class grading reading quizzes and tests each day, only to return them after we have left the topic; instead, I have more time to prepare interesting discussions and writing assignments. And at the end of the quarter, when my students finally share their private journal writing with me, I am excited to read their acknowledgements of how much they have grown as both people and writers. ●

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Dialogue Journals in Multicultural Education

Katherine P. McFarland, Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, Pennsylvania

This study examined reflective writing through the use of the dialogue journal to synthesize course materials and to help students examine more closely critical issues that impact classrooms today. For the purposes of this study, the dialogue journal was defined as an ongoing, written "conversation" between the student and the instructor over an extended period of time. Although the teacher-researcher sometimes prompted many of the topics, the student had freedom in all responses. Reflection was defined as a means to contrast/connect/interpret/define / conceptualize/compare/analyze/ classify/evaluate old constructs of knowledge into new constructs for understanding, changing, and storing information.

A resounding concern of the last two decades in teacher preparation underscores that America's teachers are in dire need of multicultural training. A decade ago, 90% of teachers were Anglo, and in elementary schools, 80% were Anglo and female (Sleeter and Grant, 1988), having little exposure to cultures other than their own (Grant, 1989). When the background of the teacher is different from the students, the classroom becomes a center of tension and anxiety (Grant, 1989; Banks & Banks, 1993). Thus, the need to restructure and transform schools is paramount to better meet the changing demographic characteristics of the nation's student population where students of color will constitute 46% of the nation's school population by the year 2020 (Pallas, Natriello, & McDill, 1989) and 49% by the year 2050 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993).

Yet, in most teacher preparation departments across the country, the one-semester curricular framework prevails (Grant & Secada, 1989). Until the day comes when multicultural education is embedded in every class, how can the teacher educator prepare the preservice teacher for the culturally pluralistic classroom?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that guides this study begins with the work of Vygotsky (1962, 1978). Through his observations of children, Vygotsky helped to clarify the relationship between language and thought development. Vygotsky observed that words and thoughts are developmental and are continually being replaced by new structures, e.g., words grow based on experience and interpretations of meaning.

What is of particular interest is Vygotsky's theory (1978) of the "zone of proximal development," which states that the learner has two different levels: a level of actual develop-

ment and a level of potential development. Potential development is guided by the assistance of one with more expertise. The "zone of proximal development" is important to this study in which the student's level of language, thought, and problem-solving ability can grow with the guidance of the teacher-educator through the use of the dialogue journal.

More recently, research on writing continues to confirm that writing is a tool for learning and reflection. Language scholars such as Moffett (1982), Britton (1980), Emig (1971), Elbow (1973), Berthoff (1983), Fulwiler (1987), and Fulwiler and Young (1982) hold that writing is a vehicle by which human beings explore meaning for different purposes, i.e., writing-to-communicate explains the matter to another, whereas writing-to-learn explains the matter to oneself (Young, 1990).

Furthermore, the writing-to-learn approach has been endorsed by many who use writing as a means of exploring thinking (Applebee, 1983; McGinley & Tierney, 1989; Young & Fulwiler, 1986). The conscious act of exploring a subject requires that a person understand the subject better (Odell, 1980). And that writing is indeed central to the academic process in learning (Emig, 1971 & 1977).

Journal writing, as a pedagogical tool for writing-to-learn, may serve the purposes of a thought-collector based on classroom readings, discussions, and reflection. Fulwiler (1987) defines the function and purpose of journals in a school setting in the following manner:

> When people write about something they learn it better. That, in a nutshell, is the idea behind asking students to keep journals. While some of us who assign these personal notebooks might argue about what they should be called—logs, learning logs, daybooks, dialectical notebooks, field notebooks, diaries, whatever—we would not disagree about their purpose and value: writing helps our students learn things better and these notebooks provide a place in which to write informally yet systematically in order to seek, discover, speculate, and figure things out. (p. 9)

Both Vygotsky's theories and current theory on writing-to-learn address the need for the use of the dialogue journal in multicultural education as a means of reflection. Vygotsky's theories on thought and language provide a context for the importance of the dialogue journal as a place to informally test thoughts, make connections, ask questions, and draw inferences as writing becomes a forum for learning. In this safe place, students can develop an awareness and understanding of the social, political, and economic inequalities that plague the classroom.

The "zone of proximal development" is important to this study in which the student's level of language, thought, and problem-solving ability can grow with the guidance of the teacher-educator through the use of the dialogue journal.

Writing-to-learn advances the notion that the journal can be a safe place to reflect on the myriad changes within classrooms that serve an increasingly multicultural, multilingual, and economically diverse population.

Methodology

Data were collected from 31 elementary education students enrolled in Foundations of Education in a Multicultural Society, a required course taken in the senior year. The course focuses on the historical, social, and philosophical concerns regarding education in a pluralistic society. As part of a new program in teacher education, the students met two hours each day for 4 weeks before entering 10 weeks of student teaching. Concurrently, the students were enrolled in a social studies methods course.

Instrumentation

During the initial meeting, much data were collected. This researcher administered two inventories on the first day to identify six students who would participate in further study based on the high/median/low scores of the Daly-Miller Test for Writing Apprehension (Daly & Miller, 1975) and a Cultural Sensitivity Inventory (McFarland, 1992; see Figure 1, p. 7).

Procedure

Dialogue journals were collected from all students twice a week, read, and returned with comments. Journal categories were developed inductively after the data were collected. The analysis did not begin with theories or hypotheses, but instead used inductive reasoning to interpret and analyze data into meaningful categories. Categories were developed by the constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Using this method, coding is directly compared to previous data in the same and different categories that eventually form the properties to be classified. Glaser and Strauss, however, go beyond the initial stages of classifying data for the purposes of generating grounded theory that does not precede data but rather emerges as a consequence of the data.

Systematic procedures support the credibility of the research findings. Triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was accomplished through the use of multiple data sources for the case studies. Besides the dialogue journal, personal data were obtained through initial profile surveys, autobiographies, and interviews. Other data sources included daily course work collected and analyzed for grading throughout the course, and three course evaluations collected during the midterm, final class, and eight weeks after the class. Although a constant comparative method of the data was conducted by the

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Cultural Inventory

Below are a series of statements that focus on how you feel about how culture affects education. Please respond to all of the items honestly. Your responses will be very helpful for others to better determine the needs of the preservice teacher. Please note that all of your responses with be held in confidence. Read carefully and circle one of the following statements for each:

	SD Strongly Disagree	D Disagree	N Neutral	A Agree	SA Strongly Agree
1.	Equality of educational opportunity exists in most public schools.	SD	D	N	A	SA
2.	I prefer teaching students whose ethnic culture is similar to mine.	SD	D	N	A	SA
3.	I am uncomfortable with people who hold values or beliefs different from mine.	SD	D	N	A	SA
4.	I believe that all children can learn.	SD	D	N	A	SA
5.	All students in the U.S. have basically the same chances to succeed.	SD	D	N	A	SA
6.	Parents from low SES (Socio-Economic Status) are not apt to be interested in how well their children are doing in school.	SD	D	N	A	SA
7.	Cultural background is a good predictor of how well children will do in school.	SD	D	N	A	SA
8.	I would be uncomfortable around students who do not speak standard English.	SD	D	N	A	SA
9.	I believe that cultural background affects students' learning abilities.	SD	D	N	A	SA
10.	I believe that teaching in an inner-city school would be a rewarding experience.	SD	D	N	A	SA
11.	Gifted teachers are born teachers.	SD	D	N	A	SA
12.	Minorities that do not do well on I.Q. tests are genetically deficient.	SD	D	N	A	SA
13.	The U.S. would be a stronger nation if we all spoke the same language.	SD	D	N	A	SA
14.	The historical contributions of all cultures should be an integral part of the classroom.	SD	D	N	A	SA
15.	I would prefer to teach only gifted and talented students in my classroom.	SD	D	N	A	SA
16.	The school should emphasize our common characteristics as human beings as opposed to our differences.	SD	D	N	A	SA
17.	Many minorities have a difficult time in school because they do not seem to care.	SD	D	N	A	SA
18.	When I encounter people that share my values and my culture, I feel I can trust them more.	SD	D	N	A	SA
19.	I prefer to teach in the kind of school I went to when I was growing-up.	SD	D	N	A	SA
20.	I would prefer working with a large number of diverse ethnic minorities in my classroom.	SD	D	N	A	SA

Figure 1.

researcher, peer debriefing and member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) were used to support credibility of classification of categories of journal entries. Specifically, two researchers and two students, familiar with the content area of multicultural education and the utilization of the dialogue journal, worked throughout the entire project for intercode reliability of journal entries.

The primary advantage of using case studies is that it provides a vehicle for "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) that attempts to "portray" in a readable fashion the complex multiple realities that emerge from an examination of the data. Case studies allow for a deeper understanding of the effects of the dialogue journal, enabling more informed decisions about their use in a multicultural context. Through the case study methodology, many insights and hypotheses emerged from the data that offer some understanding of the effectiveness of the dialogue journal for educators; however, such a study provides only an example of the wide variety of students' journals within one class.

Treatment of Data

For a comprehensive view of the dialogue journal, it is necessary to turn to a content analysis of the entries. The entries were parsed to the sections that contained multicultural references that included topics covered in class or the students' background knowledge and experiences as they relate to multicultural issues. The length of the entries was confined to the kernel of multicultural reference within one paragraph in some cases and one page in other cases. The selection process of the entries emerged from within the data simultaneously with the necessary decision-making required of the researcher. Content analysis was completed on eight students' journals for the purposes of the case studies. Nineteen possible topics were analyzed from the responses in each journal. Of the 152

possible responses, 59 showed no multicultural references and 9 were missing.

Half of the entries were prompted by the instructor. One example of a prompt asked students to respond to a case study that involved a "Limited English Proficient child from Colombia." Another prompt was written after a guest speaker had discussed "the absence of Black history in textbooks." Students then responded on how the voices of cultural minorities have been omitted from textbooks and curriculum. Otherwise, students had the opportunity to write on any subject in and out of class within the confines of their texts, class discussions, videos, invited speakers, or their own musing.

Findings

Findings from the Categories of Multicultural Understandings indicated that most students preferred to write showing a *literal understanding*. It appears that students needed to repeat, summarize, and paraphrase information from readings, discussions, speakers, or simple observations. The second most popular category was *implementation*. This can be explained by the fact that students were preoccupied with student teaching that began at the close of the four-week classes. The third most frequent category was *evaluation*. This category came as no surprise. The students easily expressed their opinions on the materials used in class in a straightforward manner. What did come as a surprise were the less opted entries of *insights* and *heightened awareness*. Such categories would show evidence that students can explore multicultural issues in many different directions and begin to develop a "critical consciousness" through writing (see Figure 2). For more discussion of categories, see McFarland, 1992.

Within the case studies, comments on journals received mixed reactions. Initially, comments were positive during the mid-term evaluation. During the interviews, however, students were able to talk more openly about the positive and negative features of the dialogue journal. The following is a synopsis of three out of eight case studies representing high, medium, and low scores on the Cultural Sensitivity Instrument. A summary of the data was taken from interviews, evaluations, journal entries, and required work.

KB, who had the highest pretest score (71) on the Cultural Sensitivity Instrument, confided that she did not use her dialogue journal to her potential. She explained that she was preoccupied taking six credit hours, working a part-time job, and observing every day in the field practicum classroom. (Students were required to observe only twice a week.) She preferred to write in class because it did not feel like "just another assignment." Although she expressed that the journal, except for the observations, was not personally helpful, she thought the idea was beneficial "even if the journal just reaches a few students in the class." The field practicum observations, however, she would have recorded in journal form whether they were required or not. KB indicated that she had already had two prior multicultural education courses. She felt that she was well prepared for the culturally diverse classroom and did not need to explore related topics in her journal. Although KB was the only student of the eight case studies that showed a negative mean difference of -13 on her pre- and post-Cultural Sensitivity Scores, she showed the widest range of entries *in literal understanding, evaluation, implementation,* as well as entries in *insights,* and *heightened awareness*. Perhaps the four-week class had a negative effect on her perceived need of the dialogue journal as well as the time restraints outside of class.

What did come as a surprise were the less opted entries of insights *and* heightened awareness. *Such categories would show evidence that students can explore multicultural issues in many different directions and begin to develop a "critical consciousness" through writing.*

KA, who represented the median score (58) on the pretest of the Cultural Sensitivity Instrument, had never taken a multicultural class. She found the journals to be "effective," though she was not able to put the time and energy that she had wanted to put into the writing. She explained that the journal was often

Frequency and Distribution of Multicultural Entries

	Number	Percentage
No Display of MC Understanding	4	4.8
Literal Understanding	24	28.6
Self in Context	5	5.9
Evaluations/Implementations/Observations		
Evaluations	15	17.9
Implementations	18	21.4
Observations	7	8.3
Insights	9	10.7
Heightened Awareness	2	2.4
		100%

Figure 2.

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the last on her list after the readings and other required work, i.e., research presentations and required lesson plans. On time limitations, she stated, "Right now I don't like writing in the journal, but I know later on it will be nice to look back on. I really enjoy writing down my classroom observations and plan on continuing them after this class." Although she did not initially value the journal, this teacher-researcher observed that KA was reticent about voicing her opinions in class; therefore, the journal often became her platform for reflection on much that she was learning. She elaborated that "she felt freer in the journals to express frustrations and concerns than in the classroom [discussions]." She stated that she "reflected more on the articles and speakers for her own purposes." KA also used her journal for important one-on-one communication with the instructor. KA showed a gain of +2 on her Cultural Sensitivity Instrument and an average range of entries that included: *no display of MC understanding, literal understanding, self in context, evaluation,* and *implementation.* Perhaps her lack of exploration may have been a result of her limited time and energy, yet the journal served many of her own personal needs to communicate through writing.

JL, who scored the lowest (29) on the Cultural Sensitivity Instrument, had never had a multicultural class, yet she benefited the most from the journals. She felt the journal really helped her to learn the material since she was far behind the rest of the class. She explains, "I like the idea of a journal. It gives you the chance to put your ideas and feelings down on paper." The journal also provided JL with a safe place to paraphrase new information. She found relief in knowing that there were no right and wrong answers, "It was just my feelings." She also enjoyed the encouraging remarks written in her journal by the instructor. JL, who did not participate in class discussions, felt that the journal helped her because "of where I was" and because "writing makes you stop and think" about the materials. JL planned to continue her journal during her teaching practicum so she could explore new material within a safe place. JL showed the most positive mean gain of +21 on the Cultural Sensitivity Instrument, though most of her journal entries reflected a *literal understanding.* Perhaps such a score reflected more on how far JL had come to prepare herself for the culturally diverse classroom.

Conclusions

This study clearly supports earlier findings that journal writing is not for everyone and does not hold the same value for all students (Charvoz, Crow, & Knowles, 1988). From the perspective of the students, four students, identified through their initials of JL, SL, AC, KA, wrote to collect thoughts and reflect on ideas. Others (DM, CR) preferred only to vent feelings. Several students (KB, KA, SL) found the classroom observations to be the most beneficial and planned to continue written observations into student teaching. One student (TR) attributed her aversion to writing to dyslexia. Journals serve many purposes for many students, though not every student benefits from the utilization of the dialogue journal to reflect on content learned.

Journals serve many purposes for many students, though not every student benefits from the utilization of the dialogue journal to reflect on content learned.

The results of this study seem to parallel the findings of previous researchers who state that many preservice teachers simply do not value reflection and feel they do not need to practice reflection to operate in the classroom, while other preservice teachers do (Johnson, 1987; Schmidt & Martin, 1991). CR and DM appeared not to value the exercise of reflection in journals. Both students showed lengthy anecdotes that had little to do with critical issues and showed little effort in all of their required course work. Overall, journals were perceived as a safe haven to vent frustrations and explore feelings, but they were used as a form of communication for students whose voices are never heard.

Implications

Many findings were apparent regarding the effectiveness of dialogue journals as a tool for reflection within multicultural education. Regardless of which pedagogical tools teacher educators choose within a one-semester study with preservice teachers, it is important within the confines of multicultural education to be able to address "why" some children make it and others fail in an educational system that clearly caters to the status quo. It is important to address the body of knowledge that multicultural education offers through readings and current findings. It is also important to address how teachers can better develop an awareness and understanding of the social, political, and economic forces that play a major role in our schools.

[**Editor's note:** For more on this topic, see Steiner, S. (2001). *Promoting a global community through multicultural children's literature.* Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited. This publication mentions over 800 sources and suggests 100 application strategies for teachers.] ●

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Creative Writing Journals

Kay McSpadden, English teacher, York Comprehensive High School, York, North Carolina

The lock was the appeal, really—that and the tiny key that opened it. I loved the idea that I alone had access to the featureless white diary with its pages numbered for each day of the year.

For several weeks after I received the diary as a Christmas gift from my mother, I faithfully recorded the details of my twelve-year-old life — music lessons and homework, a squabble with a sibling, catalogs of foods eaten, television shows watched, and books read, but even the lock lost its appeal when I realized that no one, not even my snoopy younger sister, was motivated enough to pry it open or interested enough to read my words if she had. At first I wrote in the diary every day, then only once a week, and finally not at all. When I lost the key forever, the locked diary was tossed into the back of a closet and forgotten.

Years later, I groaned when the instructor of the post-graduate writing seminar mentioned that we would be keeping writing journals. I thought immediately of the little white diary and my unexciting existence silently recorded in its pages, but the instructor was quick to establish the difference between a diary and a journal—a diary, she said, is private and often factual; our writing journals were to be reflective and written with each other in mind as our audience.

Although I was skeptical, I soon

found the journal writing and the shared readings the most enjoyable part of the seminar. Suddenly the other teachers in the room became real people to me with real concerns and real opinions, and I realized that what had bored me all those years ago with my diary had been the privacy promised by the lock.

Despite the enjoyment of writing and sharing my seminar journal, I was reluctant to introduce journaling to my high school students. I already felt pressured to cover an extensive curriculum; journals, I was sure, would consume too much time. Even when the French teacher raved about her success using double-entry journals with her advanced literature students, I resisted.

"But it works," she said. "The students record a word or phrase on the left side of the paper and their comments or questions to the right. I take the journals up every day and write the answers to their questions. They are finding the journals very helpful."

I agreed that double-entry journals would be helpful with students learning unfamiliar French vocabulary, but I assured my colleague that students in an English class would be wasting their time. That was before a student raised his hand in my college prep junior American literature class and asked me what the word "significant" meant.

Before I could get over my astonishment and answer, another student chimed in, "Yeah! I always see that word on tests, and I don't really understand what it means."

We started keeping double-entry journals.

The standing assignment is to make entries about each night's reading and to choose one question or comment to share at the beginning of the next class. Instead of taking up the journals and writing in them as my French colleague does, I use the students' questions as discussion starters for each piece of assigned literature and quickly assess the students' understanding of it.

As useful as double-entry journals are in American literature, they are useless in creative writing class. Instead of asking students to respond to literature assignments in double-entry journals, I use a different type of journal, usually suggesting a topic or giving an incomplete sentence as a prompt, always with the escape clause that they can choose any topic they prefer as long as they write for at least ten minutes. For some of the students, this is easy—they are the few students who choose to take the class because they have always liked to write and who have a measure of self-assurance. For most of the students, ten minutes is an eternity. These are the students who land in creative writing because they need an elective credit and their first choice—driver's ed—is full.

Suddenly the other teachers in the room became real people to me with real concerns and real opinions, and I realized that what had bored me all those years ago with my diary had been the privacy promised by the lock.

When I introduced journals to my creative writing class several years ago, I gave students the option of reading aloud their entries or keeping them private, but if one student refrained from reading aloud, the rest of the class fell like dominoes into stubborn silence. Now I give the students the same speech my postgraduate professor gave me about the difference between diaries and journals and put them on notice that everyone has to read what they write.

"If it is too private to share with the class," I warn, "don't write it in this journal."

If I was worried initially that this caveat would purge their entries of anything reflective or introspective and turn them into the type of flat recounting of details that had plagued my own early diary, the students soon alleviated that concern. Instead, their entries are not lists of facts but personal revelations about their lives, many painful to hear but healing to write.

They write about the miseries and joys of being teenagers in a rural county of South Carolina, an hour away from the nearest movie theater, shopping mall, or bowling alley, and almost that far away from their afternoon and evening jobs as cashiers and baggers and stockers in the grocery stores.

They write about their small-town heroes—the doctors and teachers and parents who have seen them through the valleys of childhood diseases and sorrows and journeyed with them to the summits of youthful triumphs.

They write clear-eyed accounts of the villains in their lives—abusive boyfriends and neglectful foster parents and the drunken relatives who know all the local police by name.

They write about their fears and hopes for their own children—and several young girls have struggled to stay awake in class each day after staying up at night with sick babies—and they write about the beauty of the nearby river and their favorite hunting spots and the secret wishes that they cannot tell anybody—not anybody except all of us listening intently each day in creative writing class.

They often respond to each other's writing spontaneously, encouragingly, sympathetically, giving Mandy a hug the day she sobbed as she read her entry about visiting her father in prison, reaching out and touching Roni on the shoulder when she wrote about the murder of her six-year-old brother, applauding when the student with a serious brain injury wrote about winning a slot on her church's handbell choir, and they are as caring when I read what I write in

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my journal every day, too. For those few minutes, we abandon our tribal allegiances to *Us* and *Them* and celebrate the paradox of unity found in diversity, being collaborators and peers; although we rarely comment on the quality of the writing, we often comment on the depth of the thoughts expressed.

Other teachers have found ingenious ways to use journal entries in individual writing conferences or have collected the journals regularly to read and grade student-identified pages, but I haven't tweaked the creative writing journals in that direction. Instead, my students sometimes use their journal entries as springboards for longer, more deleveloped pieces, but more often the journals serve as unedited writing practice to unveil before an enthusiastic audience. The journals may not teach my students everything they need to know about writing, but they teach my students and me about each other, and that, it seems to me, is a lesson worth learning. ●

Book Reviews

Accidental Genius: Revolutionize Your Thinking through Private Writing

Mark Levy. 2000. Berrett-Koehler Publishers (450 Sansome Street, Suite 1200, San Francisco, CA 94111-3320, USA). ISBN 1-57675-083-3. Softcover. 142 pp. U.S. $16.95.

Reviewed by Bonita L. Wilcox, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, Edinboro

Once in a great while, I read a book that seems to say exactly what I have been thinking. "I could have written that," I may comment to a colleague. At other times, I wished I had stopped reading before the end of the book because the most worthwhile information was in the first 50 pages. But on really rare reads, I find a book that keeps my brain busy from the Foreword to the Index. Levy has written one of those kinds of books. He puts your metacognitive resources "on call" and requires active thinking as the reader discovers the magic of private writing.

You need only to work through the suggested activities to discover for yourself the magic in the writing. In *Crafting a Life* (1996), Donald Murray, one of the greatest writing teachers of our time, mentions "the magic" and discovery of surprise. "I write to discover what I am thinking" (p. 46). He explains that even at 70, he writes what he does "not expect," and "I invite, encourage, cultivate, welcome, and follow surprise" (p. 54). Trust me, you will be surprised with what you discover in your writing if you follow Levy's advice and prompts. And you may want to use this approach with your students.

Part one is an introduction; part two contains the 6 "secrets of private writing"; part three suggests 12 ideas for refining your thinking and writing; and, part four provides prompts to stretch your thinking and offers books to instruct your writing. Now, you may be thinking, "So what?" Well, let me tell you that Mark Levy is a magician as well as a writer, but the extraordinary effect of these mind games does not involve the sleight of hand. Begin "easy," the author tells us, with a journal you can use as a "junk drawer" to dump in all your thoughts. Then, you start writing faster and try to "think of yourself as a word and thought factory." Levy encourages you to set a timer and use "kitchen" language so you will record your thoughts quickly and not notice any "second thoughts," revisions, or refinements. This eliminates a lot of interference and lets you write the way you think. Private writing, he tells the reader, is "a means of watching your self think" (p.32).

Are you ready for more? Levy tells the reader/writer to go "with your thoughts," but extend your thinking by redirecting "your mind towards the unexplored parts of a situation." Now, I know this seems like a lot, but it is only the beginning. We have heard about the writing and thinking connection, but this author guides you through your writing/thinking processes as a demonstration of the power of private writing.

Let me explain in a little more detail just one of Levy's thinking/writing suggestions. He calls it "holding a paper conversation." For this exercise, there are two rules: 1) Put meat on the characters before making them speak, and 2) Get the characters to make you speak. I would like to share with you my make-believe conversation with Donald M. Murray. Here is my journal response to this prompt:

Me: *I have this huge writing project to do and I have to set a date for completion. I am not very good at meeting deadlines, let alone setting one. It seems that I usually take much longer than I planned when completing a writing assignment. I always end up ignoring my week's tasks to focus and get it done. This strategy won't work this time because the project can't be done in a week.*

DMM: *First you need to examine your writing habits to determine how disciplined you are. You will also need to consider your mindset toward writing. Have you done that?*

Me: *Well, I try to write regularly, and I know that I am most efficient as a morning writer. I am often overly concerned with quality as I write, and it causes me to be much less productive. This particular project can make a big difference in my professional life, but I need to give attention to the "other" responsibilities I have. I seem to have trouble moving several projects ahead at the same time. I think that I could set aside 3 hours 3 times a week for this project.*

DMM: *I know of a writer who set a timer and wrote 250 words every 15 minutes for several hours a day. Not all quality writing, but much of it was useable. As for me, I write every day and I set deadlines. If I were to write a page a day, in 365 days I could write a book-length manuscript. I usually try to write about a page a day, whether writing to deadline or not. If you wrote a page a day, 3 days a week, for 33 weeks, you would have written 99 pages. Would that do it?*

Me: *Well, if I think in terms of words and pages produced, rather than the number of hours, I can make a closer estimate. Still, as you always say, "the rump has to meet the chair on schedule"* (p. 22).

After this conversation, I was able to set an accurate due date for my project and get on with my life. I chose Donald Murray because I have read many of his books about writing. To get the information I needed, I had to make him ask me the questions.

Levy claims, "thoughts actually jump from our minds all the time" (p. 4), and in his book he tells us how to capture them and make them useable.

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Getting It Published: A Guide for Scholars and Anyone Else Serious about Serious Books

William Germano. 2001. The University of Chicago Press (5801 South Ellis, Chicago, IL 60615, USA). ISBN 0-226-28844-7. Softcover. 197 pp. U.S. $15.00.

Reviewed by Bonita L. Wilcox

Don't let this title about scholars and serious books scare you. This book is so well written and informative you may want to keep it a secret from the competition. If you are a published book author, you may think you know enough about the publication process. On the other hand, you might be wise to take a look at the other side of the book-publishing story from an editor's point of view. The academic publishing process can be overwhelming and confusing at times, but Germano has the knowledge and the language to clarify the fine points, reveal some unknowns, and answer questions authors may not think to ask.

Throughout this book, the reader moves from the author's perspective to the editor's perspective; this is what the "author gives the publisher . . ." and this is what the "publisher gives an author . . ." (pp. 98–99), these are your six obligations and these are my six obligations; this is "what the author brings" and this is "what the publisher brings" (pp. 184–185). It is important to know both sides of the publishing process, even though we all know that there can be exceptions, unexpected changes, special situations, or a big surprise during the two years it usually takes to write and publish a book.

The academic publishing process can be overwhelming and confusing at times, but Germano has the knowledge and the language to clarify the fine points, reveal some unknowns, and answer questions authors may not think to ask.

In Chapter 1, Germano explains the concept of audience from the publisher's point of view. He calls it the "definable readership" (p. 2). I found this so interesting that I put the information in a graphic organizer to more easily share it with others.

In Chapter 2, the reader gets an overview of different kinds of publishers—trade, textbook, scholarly, and reference publishers. The author also clarifies what different editors do—acquisitioning, acquiring, copy, development, and managing editors. He writes, "No editor wants to take on a manuscript with multiple personality disorder" (p. 11). Editors get help from reviewers in selecting books that will keep them in business. Of course, scholarly publishers and editors seem to enjoy the academic prestige associated with their role of "gatekeeper" when it comes to advancing knowledge.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 offer some good advice about writing the manuscript, finding a place to send it, and preparing the proposal. In Chapters 6 and 7, the reader can see the review process first hand. "Editors take advice, study the competition, read journals, absorb topical material from the mass media, attend conferences, surf the Net, lunch with agents" (p. 73). What the editor needs to see in the manuscript is the "potential for a sensible risk." Reviewers, however, are the experts in the field. Editors, at least in scholarly publishing, depend on the "academic authority" of the reviewers as they evaluate the manuscript for "intellectual soundness, scholarly contribution, competition, audience, marketability, and maybe even the price it could bear" (p. 85–86).

The next few chapters offer information on contracts, on authoring an edited publication, and on "Other Headaches." Finally, in Chapters 11 and 12, Germano explains the last part of the book publication process. I found the very last chapter to be friendly right down to "books to keep at your elbow." Still, one feels the power of the editor even as you finish this chapter. Most of us understand that an editor can make good suggestions "even without reading every single word of the manuscript" (p. 74), but "The first decision—read it or not? invite the submission or not?—takes place in the blink of an eye" (p. 79).

Germano's words will stick with you. All in all, a good read for all writers of nonfiction books.

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Search for a New Editor of *English Journal*

NCTE is seeking a new editor of *English Journal*. In July 2003, the term of the present editor, Virginia Monseau, will end. Interested persons should send a letter of application to be received **no later than October 31, 2001.** Letters should include the applicant's vision for the journal, and be accompanied by the applicant's vita, one sample of published writing, and at least one letter of general support from appropriate administrators at the applicant's institution. Do not send books, monographs, or other materials that cannot be easily copied for the Search Committee. Classroom teachers are both eligible and encouraged to apply. The applicant appointed by the NCTE Executive Committee in April 2002 will effect a transition, preparing for his or her first issue in September 2003. The appointment is for five years. Applications should be addressed to Margaret Chambers, *English Journal* Search Committee, NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096. Questions regarding any aspect of the editorship should be directed to Margaret Chambers, Managing Editor for Journals: mchambers@ncte.org, (217) 278-3623.

Call for Manuscripts for "Integrating Technology"

ELQ is seeking manuscripts for the October 2002 issue on "Integrating Technology." Few of us question the need for integrating technology into the school curriculum, but "what exactly are technological 'best practices' in a secondary school? How can technology help students and teachers reach for the national curriculum standards? In what ways can technology help make high schools more collaborative, authentic, and challenging?" (Daniels, Bizar, & Zemelman, 2001, p.195). Some *do* question the need for integrating technology in elementary classrooms. What kinds of instructional strategies are most appropriate? How do we sift and sort Internet resources for youngsters? How do we help students assess Internet sites? What kinds of computer skills are essential for learners? How do teachers gain expertise in teaching digitally? Should we, as leaders in English education, encourage the use of instructional technology? Would you like to share your stories with *ELQ* readers? **Deadline: June 14, 2002.**

2001 CEL Election Slate

Candidates for Member-at-Large

Robin B. Luby, immediate past president, California Association of Teachers of English; chair, Staff Development Committee (former Change Process Committee, acting Site Council) GUHS; member, District English Curriculum Revision Committee. **Formerly:** State membership chair, CATE; president of San Diego Council (GSDCTE); chair of District English Council; department chair at El Capitan High School and Grossmont High; District Professional Growth Committee. **Member:** CATE, NCTE, CEL, ALAN, SLATE, CRA, IRA, NEA. **Publications:** Articles in *California English* and GSDCTE newsletter "Easy Reference." **Awards:** Fellow, California Literature Project and San Diego Area Writing Project; National Gallery of Art selective program participant, 1991. **Program Participant:** Chair 1995 NCTE Convention Special Services Committee; 1987 convention chair, CATE; various service positions.

Position Statement: Though a classroom teacher for 38 years, I still retain great zest for learning and enthusiasm for ideas. My service has provided opportunities to work with the best people as they sought to create better conditions for classrooms—by touching legislative agendas, by reexamining ideas and practices, and by constantly reaching to expand the circle of involved professionals. In a time of tsunami-like forces on our profession, I bring proven organizational skills and personal commitment to the challenges of charting a vibrant future.

Maureen T. McSherry, English department chairperson for 22 years, Thornridge High School, Dolton, Illinois; English instructor for 31 years. **Formerly:** Vice president, Faculty Association District 205; delegate, NEA and Illinois Education Association Conventions. **Member:** NCTE, CEL, ASCD, NEA, Illinois Education Association. **Awards:**

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Who's Who among America's Teachers, 25 Years of Dedicated Service-District 205.

Position Statement: In this age of accountability, CEL needs leaders who will articulate emphatically the importance of language arts at all levels of a child's education. "Teaching to a test" is becoming the standard in the language arts classroom for our primary, middle school, and secondary level students. The innovation, creativity, and joy of teaching literature are being stifled. CEL must be the "voice" of language arts and encourage all English teachers to continue to spark the joy of literature and the power of the written word in the classroom.

Kathleen Siegfried, district K–12 language arts supervisor, Bordentown Regional School District, New Jersey; vice president/program chair New Jersey Language Arts Leaders Association (NJLALA); vice president, Burlington County Curriculum Consortium; liaison PDSN at TCNJ; NJ Standards Review Committee. **Formerly:** OCTELA (Ohio); secondary English teacher. **Member:** NCTE, CEL, ASCD, NJSCD, NJPSA, NJ Staff Development Council. **Publications:** *NJASA Perspective, ELQ*. **Awards:** NEH Fellow 1984, NCTE/CEL 1998 Best Article Award: "Breaking the Bonds of Time: Block Scheduling as a Pathway to Change." **Program Participant:** OCTELA, NJLALA, NJPSA, NJASA, Holmes Partnership National Conference 2000; numerous local workshops.

Position Statement: Who will tell the stories—real stories about real life in our schools today? Challenged to foster growth and change in a climate where education is politicized and educators are criticized, one can easily lose sight of the achievements that predominate. And schools *are* succeeding in this time when we know more than ever before about teaching and learning! Strong educators—at heart, eternally teachers themselves—must empower classroom teachers to reflect on their practices, to search for new solutions, and to celebrate their successes. By giving voice to the professionals in the classroom, leaders will enlighten and give hope to a skeptical public.

John R. Underwood, principal at the John F. McCloskey Elementary School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. **Formerly:** Middle school assistant principal; teacher of English for high school, middle school, and elementary school; kindergarten teacher and supervisory teacher for Head Start. **Member:** NCTE, CEL, and Children's Literature Assembly, ASCD, Pennsylvania Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals (PAESSP), and National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP).

Position Statement: A child's learning begins at an early age. A child's formal education now begins much earlier than ever before. School systems are developing a curriculum that begins in the preschool years. A major focus on language arts is prevalent everywhere. We have a responsibility to provide leadership to educators in all levels of English and literacy instruction, especially to those in early childhood education and the primary grades. As a leader in CEL, I can provide leadership to that group. With my experience in early childhood, elementary, and secondary education, I can provide knowledgeable bridges concerning all three levels.

2001 CEL Ballot

The CEL Bylaws permit members to vote either by mail or at the CEL business session of the NCTE Annual Convention. Each member mailing a ballot should mark it and mail it in an envelope with a **return name and address** to: Helen Poole, CEL Ballots, 502 Green Mountain Rd., Mahwah, NJ 07430-2749.

Ballots must be postmarked **no later than November 1, 2001.** Members who prefer to vote at the Convention will be given a ballot and an envelope at the business session of CEL. An institution with membership may designate one individual as the representative to vote on its behalf. Please list the institution's name and address on the outside of the envelope.

Member-at-Large
(vote for two)

- ❑ Robin B. Luby
- ❑ Maureen T. McSherry
- ❑ Kathleen Siegfried
- ❑ John R. Underwood
- ❑ _____
  (write-in candidate)

Call for Manuscripts—Future Issues

The *English Leadership Quarterly*, a publication of the NCTE Conference on English Leadership (CEL), seeks articles of 500–5,000 words on topics of interest to those in positions of leadership in departments (elementary, secondary, or college) where English is taught. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are always welcomed. Software reviews and book reviews related to the themes of upcoming issues are encouraged.

A decision about a manuscript will be reached within two months of submission. The *Quarterly* typically publishes one out of ten manuscripts it receives each year.

Surveys of our readers reveal these topics of interest: leadership studies, class size/class load, support from the business community, at-risk student programs, integrated learning, problems of rural schools, and the whole language curriculum philosophy. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In particular, upcoming issues will have these themes:

February 2002 (deadline October 15, 2001)
Alternative Assessment

April 2002 (deadline December 30, 2001)
Teachers as Researchers

August 2002 (deadline April 16, 2002)
Leadership and Literacy

October 2002 (deadline June 14, 2002)
Integrating Technology (see call, p. 14)

Manuscripts may be sent on 3.5" floppy disks with IBM-compatible ASCII files, or as traditional double-spaced typed copy. Address articles and inquiries to Bonita Wilcox at P.O. Box 142, Cambridge Springs, PA 16403; e-mail: jwilcox@toolcity.net; phone: (814) 398-2528. ●

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▶ IN THIS ISSUE

Alternative Assessment

Bonita L. Wilcox, editor

Although the complexities of grading were not a significant part of the curriculum at teachers' colleges in the '60s, we knew the importance of grades by graduation. Most of us learned about grading students from personal experience, from using strategies our teachers used, and from strategies our colleagues were using. Unfortunately, almost all of us, from the '60s anyway, have promoted traditional practices of grading. Today, literacy leaders look toward alternative assessments that promote learning and validate teacher judgment.

Few among us have not felt the negative aspects of grades ourselves, or seen their negative effects on student attitudes toward writing and writing assessment. In an article entitled, "The End of Grades?: Assessing for Change in the Secondary English Classroom," Slifkin writes, "Grades and percentage points are an academic standard. Who hasn't felt fear when getting an essay or test returned?" (2000, p. 9). This fear comes from not knowing how the teacher will respond to our writing. Students seem to sense that what one teacher finds "good" another may find lacking. One teacher looks for creativity and the development of an idea. Another may count spelling errors, superficial mistakes in mechanics, or poor handwriting. Some teachers give one grade for vocabulary and one for content. Some give points, percents, letters, or stickers. It might even be possible that the same teacher would assign a different grade to the same paper at a different time of the day. Oftentimes students discover "what the teacher wants" through trial and error. These students get good grades. As teachers of English, we seem to have survived the individual preferences of our teachers, giving little thought to those who didn't.

Donald Murray advises, "the writing teacher must not be a judge, but a physician. His job is not to punish, but to heal" (Lindemann, p. 191). When grading students, Tom Romano writes, "we must always keep in mind that our responses and our grades help create their self-images as learners, help shape their attitudes toward future writing. And in the future, above anything else, we want them to write again" (Romano, p. 128). The idea of helping rather than correcting involves a change in attitude. Instead of asking, "What grade does this paper deserve?" the question is "What can I suggest to help this writer?" Eventually, "What did I get?" becomes less important to the student than the question, "Where do I go from here?"

Unfortunately, it seems that "grading is not just a pedagogical or psychometric practice, but a cultural ritual" (Trumbull & Farr, 2000, p. 23), and we all can claim some degree of expertise. "We judge, misjudge, forejudge, prejudge, and pass judgments on ourselves, our students, our colleagues, our supervisors, and our spouses. We approve, support, and praise our work, our food, our thinking, and our situations. Or we disrespect, disapprove, and censure what others do and say" (Wilcox, p. 294). We understand that fair and accurate

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assessment requires evidence, yet 96% on an essay or an objective test seems to be stronger evidence than a whole portfolio of student work. It is as if we have been conditioned to think that if "9 out of the 10 persons asked" agree, who are we to question?

Testing is rarely a "learning" opportunity, and our emphasis on ranking and sorting to assign grades has contributed to negative feelings about summative assessment. In his well-known publication, *The Case against Standardized Testing*, (2000), Alfie Kohn writes, "Tests have lately become a mechanism by which public officials can impose their will on schools, and they are doing so with a vengeance" (p. 2). Kohn continues, ". . . our children are tested to an extent that is unprecedented in our history and unparalleled anywhere else in the world." We have all felt the impact of state-mandated, high-stakes testing. Fortunately, teachers are still in charge of student assessment, and we have a variety of options. "Assessment for learning requires teaching professionals to consider their practices in terms such as the impact assessment has on students, the power of assessment, the intimate connection between assessment and instruction, and the support needed to alter assessment practice" (Reineke, 1998, p. ix).

In *Rethinking High School: Best Practice in Teaching, Learning, and Leadership* (2001), Daniels, Bizar, and Zemelman write about four teachers in an elite Chicago suburb who suggested eliminating daily, weekly, and mid-semester grades. "This community will never accept 'alternative assessment,' the reasoning went. They'll demand hard numbers, letter grades, and rankings—not conferences and portfolios with a single end-of-semester grade" (p. 226). Three years later, the "[T]eachers reported that removing the burden (and the threat) of daily grading has opened up and deepened their instruction" (p. 227). This book shows the importance of assessment *during* instruction, rather than after instruction. The suggested assessment procedures have been shown to be helpful and positive.

Controversy over grading is nothing new, and teachers have struggled with questions concerning accuracy in grades and scores since the early 1900s. After all, many believe that grades and scores can predict success in college and in life, can be used for diagnosis to inform instruction, can measure learning, and can compare large groups or individuals. For the rest of us, we will continue to investigate alternative assessments, with the hope of finding better tools to encourage and increase learning. In this issue, Teresa Henning describes the change from alienation to involvement of her English department faculty as they developed assessment measures in higher education. Jennifer Abrams offers a step-by-step approach for beginning teachers to monitor their students during instruction for evidence of learning. Two book reviews offer information on alternative assessment and reporting grades. ●

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The Conference on English Leadership (CEL) of the National Council of Teachers of English is an organization dedicated to bringing together English language arts leaders to further their continuing efforts to study and improve the teaching of English language arts. The CEL reaches out to department chairs, teachers, specialists, supervisors, coordinators, and others who are responsible for shaping effective English instruction. The CEL strives to respond to the needs and interests germane to effective English instruction from kindergarten through college, within the local school, the central administration, the state, or the national level.

It is the policy of NCTE in its journals and other publications to provide a forum for the open discussion of ideas concerning the content and the teaching of English and the language arts. Publicity accorded to any particular point of view does not imply endorsement by the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, or the membership at large, except in announcements of policy where such endorsement is clearly specified.

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Beyond Standardized Testing: A Case Study in Assessment's Transformative Power

Teresa B. Henning, Purdue University North Central

"Learning outcomes assessment" has become one of the biggest academic and administrative buzzwords of the late 20th and early 21st centuries for both secondary- and college-level administrators and educators. At the secondary level, the focus on assessment is often the result of state governments' desires to hold schools and teachers "accountable" for the successes and failures of their students. Assessment's importance at the college level is, as Indiana College English President Patrick Daly (2001) points out, often a result of accreditation bodies insisting that schools "document student learning and development" (p. 1).

The fact that assessment at both the secondary and college levels is often driven by outside agencies not intimately involved with students and teachers at the specific school to be assessed can often make assessment meaningless and painful to educators at both levels. This process can become especially burdensome and meaningless to English teachers if they are forced to assess their students via standardized tests. Most secondary and college English teachers find rigid assessment measures such as standardized testing distasteful because they realize that these measures do not accurately reflect our students' knowledge and capabilities. As Theodore Sizer argues in *Horace's Hope* (1996), standardized testing is "seriously flawed, giving us at best snippets of knowledge about a student and at worst a profoundly distorted view" (xiii). In addition, Sizer notes that there is no evidence that testing scores correlate with students' future success (xiii). In the end, when conceived of rigidly, such assessment programs not only fail to provide teachers with an accurate picture of their students' abilities, but they can also alienate educators from their profession—a position that Sizer claims is far too common for today's high school teachers.

However, learning outcomes assessment at both the secondary and college levels need not rely solely on rigid measures, like those associated with standardized tests, to be institutionally acceptable and successful. Assessing the learning outcomes of students can be done in a flexible manner that embraces an understanding of knowledge as something that is not "merely covered but discovered and un-covered" (Harris, 1993, p. 63) and recognizes the "importance of context and the individual" (Huot, 1996, p. 561). When English faculty, like those in my department, realize that outcomes assessment can be related to a sophisticated and context-driven definition of knowledge, they often not only become enthusiastic about developing assessment measures, but they also come to a better understanding of their own and their colleagues' pedagogical values. As a result, teachers learn to build alliances with their colleagues and are able to stave off some of the alienation that Sizer describes, and which I would argue, plagues not only high school teachers but many college teachers as well. English faculty can develop such an appreciation for the transformative power of assessment when they are offered a flexible definition of assessment, work together to create learning goals and objectives, and are provided with heuristics for creating their own assessment measures and procedures.

However, learning outcomes assessment at both the secondary and college levels need not rely solely on rigid measures, like those associated with standardized tests, to be institutionally acceptable and successful.

Towards a Flexible Definition of Assessment

Providing faculty with a flexible definition of assessment that also addresses their humanistic values is an important first step in realizing assessment's transformative power. At my institution, this step was initiated at a university-wide workshop on assessment that was designed to both prepare faculty to begin assessment work within their own departments and to prepare them for an upcoming accreditation visit at which learning outcomes assessment would be a major focus. There were two immediate benefits: the looming accreditation visit motivated faculty to attend the workshop and carry through on assessment concerns, and the definition of assessment offered at the workshop provided faculty with the beginnings of procedural knowledge (i.e., the "how-to" knowledge) for specific and concrete action.

One important aspect of the definition of assessment that nursing chair Marilyn Asteriadis articulated at the faculty workshop concerned the *purpose* of assessment. She argued that the focus on learning outcomes assessment by the North Central Association (NCA—the accrediting body for my institution) revolves around its commitment to regarding

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colleges and universities as "institutions of student learning" rather than "institutions of faculty teaching." NCA's vision of colleges and universities as student-oriented learning institutions, Asteriadis noted, means that student learning outcomes assessment takes on more significance as a means for discovering whether or not students in a particular institution/department are learning what the institution/department purports to be teaching.

Assessment, then, as Asteriadis simply puts it, is the "process of gathering information . . . about the extent to which an institution [or department] is achieving what it purports to do." By defining assessment as a process of gathering information, and by linking it to a re-centering of the institution around the student, Asteriadis's definition rests on two values that faculty at a teaching institution often hold: first, that faculty members must work primarily for the good of the students (rather than the good of themselves or the institution), and second, that academic scholarship in which "assessment" is the "gathering of information" must serve as the driving force behind all decisions and initiatives. In addition to creating a definition of assessment that resonates with values most faculty members are likely to hold, Asteriadis also made her definition practical by offering specific examples of direct, indirect, and non-measures of student achievement (see Figure 1).

Creating Learning Goals and Objectives

While the workshop on assessment offered by Asteriadis and her colleagues provided faculty in my department with both an acceptable definition of assessment and the motivation to take assessment seriously, it did not lay out a process the department could follow for developing assessment measures of our own. In order to create assessment measures, my department needed to create both learning goals and objectives and direct or indirect assessment measures (like those described in Figure 1). The creation of departmental learning objectives was, at first, a daunting process that met with faculty resistance. Some faculty members felt that they knew what they were attempting to accomplish in their own classes but that those objectives could not be generalized to the whole department. Other faculty members picked up on this objection and began to argue that the whole idea of department-wide learning objectives and assessment measures was highly reductive, much like the move to standardized testing in secondary education. So, despite the workshop, faculty members in my department still felt alienated by the assessment process and viewed it as antithetical to their humanistic values.

In response to this initial alienation, I reminded the faculty members that the assessment process was ours to control and that we could, in fact, create learning objectives and assessment measures that fit with our desire for a sophisticated understanding of English studies. In retrospect, I now realize that faculty resistance to this project tended to occur at times of stress, especially when the next step of the assessment process was unclear. Ultimately, reassuring faculty members that they were in control of the process and then offering them a concrete strategy to move forward easily countered the resistance.

To counter the resistance to creating learning outcomes, I provided faculty members with a photocopy of the learning goals from an English department at another institution. I suggested that these serve as a model for writing their own individual learning goals that we would discuss at our next meeting. While some balked at the work this would require, I encouraged the faculty to consider this exercise as a brainstorming list or free write that could be as "complete" or "incomplete" as they liked. I also explained that their work would simply ensure that every member had input into the goals we

Examples of Direct, Indirect, and Non-Measures of Assessment

Direct Assessment Measures	Indirect Assessment Measures	Non-Assessment Measures
Capstone experiences	Alumni, employer, student surveys	Grades and GPA
Portfolios	Exit interviews and focus groups	Special program/ curriculum reviews
Pre- and post-testing	Graduate follow-up studies	Student goal attainment questionnaires
Standardized tests	Retention and transfer rates	Course selection/ course enrollment
National licensure, certification, professional exams	Time to degree completion	Faculty/student ratios
Locally developed tests	Graduation and transfer rates	Enrollment trends
Juried review of senior projects	Job placement data	Diversity of student body
External reviews of exhibits and/or performances	SAT scores	

Source: Asteriadis, M. (August 2000). "Assessment of Student Learning Achievement." Faculty Convocation Presentation. Purdue University North Central. Westville, IN.

Figure 1.

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would be creating at the next meeting. The end result of this discussion was that everyone came to the meeting with ideas for drafting a set of learning goals and objectives, even if all they brought was highlighting on the original list.

At the next meeting, we discussed the brainstorming lists and added more goals to our lists. At a subsequent meeting, one faculty member used a cut and tape method to group faculty member ideas into categories, and faculty members worked together to remove duplicate ideas. The group then created a draft of learning outcomes by subdividing ideas in each category into learning goals (i.e., broad pedagogical concepts) and learning objectives (i.e., a specific task or classroom activity completed to support an objective). This process took an entire fall semester to complete and was at times fraught with conflict, but, in the end, the faculty created a set of learning goals and objectives that they felt were relevant to their own pedagogical goals and subdisciplines (see Figure 2).

Creating Flexible Assessment Measures

After a brief winter break, the spring semester began with the realization that the hard work completed in the fall semester was only a starting point for the assessment work yet to come. However, despite this anticlimatic realization, the faculty were eager to participate in more directed "homework" for creating assessment measures. As homework, I followed the lead of other institutions and asked faculty members to link each learning objective with a particular course or set of courses in which the objective would be addressed (see Figure 3).

At a subsequent meeting, we discussed the faculty members' homework and attempted to come to some consensus about which courses could be linked to which objectives. Since we had jointly created the objectives the previous semester, we knew the courses and objectives should match,

Program Goals and Objectives (Sections II and III of the Program Assessment Document)

II. PROGRAM GOALS (INCLUDING CAMPUS-WIDE GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS):

1. Majors in English should be familiar with different critical apparatuses (e.g., theoretical, historical, genre-related, etc.).
2. Majors in English should understand the ethical and political responsibilities that come with textual power.
3. Majors in English should be familiar with the historical changes within the development of the English language.
4. Majors in English should be familiar with British, American, ethnic, and other world literatures from various historical periods.
5. Majors in English should have a critical understanding of rhetoric when crafting a text.
6. Majors in English should have an ability to conduct research in a critical and analytical manner.

III. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT (INCLUDING CAMPUS-WIDE GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS):

1a. Students should understand, distinguish, and write about various literary genres including the essay, the novel, drama, the short story, poetry, and film.
1b. Students should read texts for subtextual as well as surface meanings.
1c. Students should apply critical and theoretical methods of analysis to interpret and write about printed, electronic, and performed texts.
1d. Students should write a plausible critical analysis of a text.
1e. Students should read their own papers analytically and critically.
2a. Students should evaluate the moral/political significance of texts as social acts.
2b. Students should evaluate the moral/political significance of their own textual performances.
3a. Students should trace key changes in the development of the English language.
3b. Students should apply linguistic theories to the analysis of various texts.
4a. Students can engage with and articulate the meanings of texts produced during various historical periods.
4b. Students can engage with and articulate the meanings of texts produced in various geographical areas.
4c. Students can engage with and articulate the meanings of texts produced within various cultural contexts.
5a. Students should demonstrate a consideration for audience and purpose in their writing.
5b. Students should demonstrate an ethical sensitivity to language, including its inflammatory and persuasive aspects.
5c. Students should demonstrate a critical understanding of rhetorical principles when using computer technology.
6a. Student should produce researched papers that use appropriate, credible, and reliable source material in support of a thesis.
6b. Students should conduct primary and secondary research appropriate to their field of study.
6c. Students should conduct research using both print-based and electronic tools.

(Source: Letters and Languages Section. English Department. "Program Assessment Profile," Purdue University North Central, Westville, IN, 18 December 2000.)

Figure 2.

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but what we discovered was that each of us experienced the same curriculum quite differently. At several points, our discussion deviated from the issue of assessment and became a discussion of how to teach (or how not to teach) a particular course. The sense of community that had emerged at the end of the fall was beginning to deteriorate into a typical "turf war."

In retrospect, I realize that by following the program assessment document literally, I gave the group the wrong "homework." I now know that linking learning objectives to specific courses works best *after* a general assessment program has been created. At the time, however, I was savvy enough to realize that my homework was not working and began to reconsider the next meeting's goal. What I really wanted the faculty members to do was to propose means for discovering whether our major courses fulfilled the learning goals and objectives we had articulated during the previous semester. I realized that at the next meeting, I needed to first review Asteriadis's definition of assessment and then offer some kind of homework heuristic that would lead faculty to create their own assessment measures. For homework, I modified the traditional five journalistic questions (a common prewriting technique in composition) to suit our assessment needs (see Figure 4) and asked all faculty members to come to our next meeting with answers to all six questions.

I expected that at the next meeting, we would all share our homework and simply pick the best assessment method. While our next meeting (at which all were present with complete homework) began as I had anticipated, with each faculty member sharing his or her homework in round robin fashion, no one assessment measure emerged as acceptable to us all. Rather, we found ourselves favoring pieces of each member's assessment measure but not the measure as a whole. Fortunately for us, all the selected measures fell into one of two categories: a portfolio or a survey. I was then able to divide the group into two subcommittees around these two assessment measures. Each subcommittee then refined its assigned assessment measure by synthesizing pieces of the appropriate measures that we had discussed at the previous meeting.

By suspending our attempt to link learning objectives to specific courses and by focusing on what we wanted to measure and how we wanted to measure it, our department was able to create two measures for assessment that the English faculty as a whole could support. As with the learning goals and objectives, it took an entire semester to develop these measures. However, in the end, the department developed not only a set of assessment measures, but also a strong sense of community.

My department has yet to implement our assessment measures because we have had to turn our attention to revising our department structure to meet department and university needs. However, the momentum generated by our two semesters of work with learning goals and assessment measures has led to the creation of a curriculum and assessment committee. While this committee will be responsible for implementing the department's newly created assessment procedures, its most important charge will be to address some of the curricular concerns that were raised when our attempts at matching courses with learning objectives failed to generate consensus.

Assessment's Transformative Nature

Over the course of a school year, I witnessed first-hand the transformative power of assessment when faculty members in my department stopped thinking of assessment as an alien process motivated by institutional and accreditation pressures and began to think of assessment as a valuable way of demonstrating to our students, ourselves, and others why and how the humanistic and critical thinking practices related to an English degree are valuable. This transformation was made possible because faculty members had agreed on a concrete and flexible definition of assessment that provided a common ground for the work to come. However, as this article has demonstrated, such a definition was only a starting point. To successfully create

Partial Section IV of the Program Assessment Document

(Program) Objectives

Objectives	Courses in Which the Objective Will Be Addressed	How (Criteria and Methods) and When/Where in the Program the Objective Will Be Assessed

Source: Letters and Languages Section. English Department. "Program Assessment Profile." Purdue University North Central, Westville, IN. 18 December 2000.

Figure 3.

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assessment measures, faculty members needed to learn to work together effectively. Getting faculty members to work together required that we rethink how to run our meetings; each meeting had to be highly structured with each member completing "guided homework" assignments that were used to generate both learning goals and objectives and assessment measures.

By using individual homework to involve all faculty members in the assessment process, we not only began to see the assessment process as our own, but we also developed a new understanding and respect for each other. On the whole, this experience taught us that while we may each experience and interpret the English program's curriculum differently, we share the same core values about the need to help English majors think critically and write effectively. This realization has fostered a stronger sense of community and a confidence that we can come together to complete complicated tasks that support our core values. This confidence has produced a new energy in the department and a greater willingness to participate in service projects. In the end, the process of designing a workable assessment agenda has taught us that we are capable of significantly and pragmatically transforming our curriculum, our institution, and even ourselves to better and more humanely meet the needs of our students.

[*Note:* This article would not have been possible without the fine work of the Purdue North Central English Department faculty. I am especially grateful for the support of the following: Drs. Patricia Buckler, Jesse Cohn, Susan Hillabold, Jane Rose, Tom Young, and Professors Robin Hursey and Bob Mellin.] ●

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Journalistic Heuristic for Creating Assessment Measures

Directions: Using the objectives/course grid and the assessment power point summary as guides, create your own assessment measurement tool by fully and completely responding to the journalistic prompts below.

What: Describe your assessment tool; be sure it fits with the criteria on the PowerPoint summary.

How: Describe all the relating "hows" including how the tool will be used to gather data and how the data gathered will be assessed. For instance, if your assessment tool is a portfolio, be sure to describe both how the portfolio will be collected and how the portfolio will be judged.

Who: Be sure to identify *all* the types of people (students, faculty and/or staff) that will have to be involved with your assessment tool.

Where: Here you'll need to think of location not in terms of a physical space but in terms of perhaps a disciplinary one. The "where" here refers to courses from the objectives/courses grid.

When: Remember, we *don't* have to do assessment every semester or even every year. For the "when," lay out a timeline that seems doable given your assessment tool and the people involved.

Why: Here you really need to lay out some rationale for your assessment tool. Or, if you feel unsure about your tool, map out its strengths and weaknesses.

Figure 4.

Call for Manuscripts for "Leadership and Professional Development"

ELQ is seeking manuscripts for the February 2003 issue on **Leadership and Professional Development**. In his book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (1989), Stephen Covey explains Habit 7—Sharpening the Saw: "It's preserving and enhancing the greatest asset you have—you. It's renewing the four dimensions of your nature—physical, spiritual, mental, and social/emotional" (p. 288). "Renewal is the principle—and the process—that empowers us to move on an upward spiral of growth and change, of continuous improvement" (p. 304). Not only for beginning teachers, but for seasoned teachers as well, problems of renewal abound. The personal and professional development of teachers is often not at the top of a school district's priority list. Still, many teachers have taken charge of their own professional development and found plenty of opportunities for learning and renewal. What stories can you tell about your personal/professional development that might be helpful to others? What advice do you have for novice teachers? How have you survived? How have you flourished? What have you done? What have you read? Would you like to share your stories with *ELQ* readers? **Deadline: October 15, 2002.**

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Effective Monitoring during Class Time

Jennifer Abrams, Palo Alto Unified School District, California

What does it mean when someone asks, "How are the students doing?" and you say, "Fine" or "Great" or "They really were with me today"? What do those responses mean to you and how do you actually know how the students are doing? New teachers oftentimes think that if kids are quiet and writing or raising their hands once during any given period, this indicates that they are being successful in their classes. Being a new teacher coach, I understand that from the perspective of a new teacher, silence is a nice sound and participation by certain kids really looks good. It feels good, too. With respect to their feeling good about the class, a question I pose to new teachers is this: "What exactly have you seen or heard from all students to let you know that they understand what is being taught?" For many new teachers, this question is a tough one to answer.

To assist new teachers in doing what is needed in order to be *certain* that there is truth to the statement, "My students are doing great," I take time to review the key components of monitoring. What follows is a minilesson on monitoring that includes the definition of monitoring, the key steps to doing it effectively, and some responses to commonly asked questions. Veteran teachers may be using monitoring techniques already, and newer teachers have most likely been introduced to some monitoring strategies. Still, while we can all agree that assessing student progress every few weeks when papers are handed in is not enough, many teachers don't realize that effective monitoring, as an instructional skill, is easily improved. Once effective monitoring strategies are in place, however, teachers see the benefits of knowing where students are in their learning each day.

What Is Monitoring?

By definition, monitoring is *the ability to observe the progress of learning made by all students during instructional time*. Deconstructing the definition and highlighting key words with new teachers is a first step.

Observe: This verb is critical. This word indicates that students are doing something the teacher can see or hear. It means some sort of informal assessment needs to be incorporated—a time to talk, write, answer the problem, draw, etc. A teacher cannot teach or lecture or hold a large-group discussion in which only six students speak and be able to see all students do something.

> *A question I pose to new teachers is this: "What exactly have you seen or heard from all students to let you know that they understand what is being taught?" For many new teachers, this question is a tough one to answer.*

Progress: Synonyms for *progress* are *gaining* and *moving forward*. Progress means that the student has learned *new* knowledge during the class that can be observed. The students should be able to show the teacher that they are moving forward through supporting evidence, such as labeling parts or drawing a diagram.

All students: How many students? *All* students. This small word stops new teachers and gives them pause. Teachers need to see the progress of all students, not just those who volunteer and raise their hands. What about the quiet kid who doesn't speak? Her progress matters just as much as that of the others. The teacher needs to see evidence that *all* are learning.

During instructional time: This element of monitoring is a hard one to make happen in classes where new teachers check understanding by correcting papers at home or on the weekends. Sunday afternoon may be too late, and misunderstandings are difficult to correct. Doing assessments *during* class is a more effective way to see progress.

Monitoring is being able to say that we *know* students are learning as a result of what we teach. Monitoring allows the teacher to say confidently, "The students are doing fine." This will be a *valid* response because we have observed it and can defend it. How does a new teacher go about doing the three steps of monitoring well?

Three Key Steps

In a workshop or a coaching conversation, when I go through the key words in the definition of monitoring, most new teachers recognize that some piece of monitoring is missing in their teaching. Some see that there may have been times when they were going a mile a minute with the instructions without checking their "rear view mirrors" to see if anyone was falling behind. Others become aware that their lectures might have been somewhat long, and that they didn't stop often enough to see not only if just *one* person had questions, but if *everyone* understood the idea. Others reflect back and realize that they spent lots of time in the front of

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the room and didn't really see if the students at back tables were keeping up. With this awareness in mind, we go through the three key behaviors that make a teacher successful in monitoring, and we talk about how new teachers can incorporate these steps into their practice.

Step #1: Elicit congruent, overt behavior from all students. Hearing comments from new teachers such as, "I know they are getting it because I see lights go off in their eyes," or "I haven't checked on them this week but I sense they are with me," makes me a little unsure all students have actually done something the teacher can assess. If we want to make sure students are learning content or skills, and we want to know if they are on the right track during instructional time, our assessments can't be a guess or a student's facial expression. We need to elicit a behavior that can be seen or heard. It can be a piece of writing, an oral response, a drawing, something on a white board, acting something out, a demonstration, or some other measurable action. It should also be something that measures what one is trying to teach. The word *congruent* is included in this step to make sure that students are doing something that actually aligns with the objective. If students are to understand the conflict between Phineas and Gene, having them read for everything in the chapter and then answer comprehension questions doesn't make sense. If students are to demonstrate understanding of *Macbeth* by directing a scene, having them do quote quizzes showing who said what doesn't match. Getting behaviors that are both overt and congruent to the objective is the first key piece for more accurate assessment.

Step #2: Check student behavior. Now that the behavior is out there, the teacher needs to check it. Having students do the writing or the poster or the group work isn't enough. The teacher must pay attention to what the students do in class. New teachers are busy learning new management techniques, trying to get student papers recorded by the end of the period, setting up the next overhead, etc. As a coach, I understand the amount of energy and planning it takes to make a successful class run, but if students are assigned to do something in groups, and the teacher doesn't move around the class to see how students are responding, a crucial teaching moment may be missed. New teachers push me on this. "I have to check with everyone, on everything, every day?" I respond by saying how much one needs to check depends on how essential the learning is. If a teacher is having the class learn how to write a thesis for the first major paper, my guess is the teacher would want to see all of the theses. If the teacher is having students work in pairs to improve descriptive writing skills, going to each pair and quickly glancing at the work might be enough. The intensity of the monitoring depends on how essential it is that students know the information. Sometimes just listening to groups, seeing the drawings, and getting a "thumbs up" is enough. The point is, if a teacher assigns something for a part of the period, it is important to check the students while they do it.

Our assessments can't be a guess or a student's facial expression. We need to elicit a behavior that can be seen or heard. It can be a piece of writing, an oral response, a drawing, something on a white board, acting something out, a demonstration, or some other measurable action.

Step #3: Give specific and congruent feedback. Last week, a new teacher expressed to me her concern that if she walks around during processing time and "interrupts" kids who are working, it might indicate to the student that she doesn't trust the student to do the work. I reminded her that part of her job was exactly that—to oversee the progress of learning in the class. I told her it was perfectly acceptable to speak to students during activities and to tell them how they are doing. In fact, it would further solidify the learning for the students if she gave effective feedback while they worked. New teachers often feel tension between keeping rapport with the students and keeping them on track. I tell new teachers that giving feedback is a large part of what they are there to do. So, when the students are working and the teacher is checking, how is the most effective feedback delivered?

The key element in delivering appropriate feedback is specificity. New teachers should know that it is not a bad idea to stroll around a room while students are working, glance at papers, and keep kids on task. This is a good goal for the teacher—keep students on task. Yet, it is the specific, congruent feedback given to students that will make a difference in their learning. Telling a student "Good job" or "Nicely done" doesn't have the same amount of punch as "That opening includes all the key parts we were talking about" or "Great chapter poster. It has all the elements we decided on: the 4 quotes, the symbol, etc." Giving specific feedback isn't necessarily time consuming. It doesn't take more than an extra fifteen seconds to add those two or three sentences to reinforce learning.

Another important element in delivering appropriate feedback is congruency. The congruence of feedback to the objective the teacher had in mind is crucial. For example, if the assignment in class were to take notes in an outline form, commenting

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that the handwriting was pretty doesn't align. However, if the teacher were to say, "I see you found all the major headings," that might be more in line with lesson objectives. Although giving positive feedback on aesthetics isn't necessarily bad, and giving positive feedback to students concerning their attitude, ability to work in groups, or effort on a paper is a valid thing to do, teachers need to reinforce all of the objectives they have set for a particular instructional unit, whether social/emotional or cognitive. Remembering to be specific and congruent is key.

Commonly Asked Questions from New Teachers

"How do we monitor and give feedback to 30 kids 5 periods a day?"

Monitoring and giving appropriate feedback require restructuring lesson plans or lectures or group discussions so more time is included for students to talk, process, write, or do something a teacher can see. This might mean a more consistent chunking of material and an assignment to do a quick write or a pair/trio share so the teacher can walk around to do some checking and give feedback. It might also mean having groups doing an activity and reporting so the teacher can check more quickly. Actually redesigning lessons that require students to do work more often versus giving information or having large discussions is a tough change for some. Add to that the need to check with all students during that time, and teachers might feel they have less time to record grades or to work with needier students. Getting "stuck" with one student or wanting to clean up while students are in groups are both difficult dilemmas and get new teachers off-track, but teachers who are effective monitors have learned better ways to design class time.

Monitoring and giving appropriate feedback require restructuring lesson plans or lectures or group discussions so more time is included for students to talk, process, write, or do something a teacher can see.

"Do we have to monitor for everything?"

Teachers do not need to respond to everything. Certain things that aren't critical to learning can be checked but not responded to. Certain skills can be followed up on later, so it isn't urgent that they be observed. The three steps of monitoring should be done when a teacher *needs* to assess students' progress with one idea or concept while students are still in the room and before they are formally tested on the material.

"Where does this fit in with grading?"

Teachers need to do both. Grading is an overall evaluation and summative assessment that compares a student to a given set of criteria. Monitoring is a check-in and a formative assessment—it is finding out from students how it is going so far. Both monitoring and grading are very much needed for the purpose of keeping students on track.

New teachers have their hands full learning content, keeping their procedures going smoothly, managing their materials, and learning to understand the students. With all that, they must also assess students' progress, grade papers, and assign grades. Monitoring is an instructional skill that will assist new teachers in both instruction and evaluation. When new teachers discover what it takes to more accurately monitor student learning, they will know that saying, "They were really with me" just won't do it anymore.

Author's note: I'd like to extend a special thanks to Marilyn Bates for her help and support. ●

Book Reviews

Journey of Discovery: Building a Classroom Community through Diagnostic-Reflective Portfolios

Ann M. Courtney & Theresa L. Abodeeb. 2001. International Reading Association (800 Bardsdale Road, P.O. Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139, USA). ISBN 0-87207-291-6. Softcover. 120 pp. US $17.95.

Reviewed by Barbara S. Vought, Kure Beach, North Carolina

Doing classroom research has become popular with teachers who want to improve their own practices. When teachers take the extra time to try new ways to reach the potential of all their students, good things can happen. When teachers show their students that they are learners, too, the students are apt to respond in remarkable ways. When everyone involved is willing to take the steps necessary, everyone can grow. This is what Ann M. Courtney and Theresa L. Abodeeb learned in their *Journey of Discovery* in Theresa's second-grade class, and although the process was beneficial to all students, it seemed especially beneficial for reluctant learners and beginning readers.

In 1992, Ann M Courtney, Director of Reading and Early Childhood Education at American International College in Springfield, Massachusetts, and Theresa L. Abodeeb, a second-grade teacher at East Street School in Ludlow, Massachusetts, began this study as a result of beginning teachers' frustrations over

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meaningful assessment of literacy learning in their classrooms. Their goal to improve literacy assessment led to the use of portfolios and culminated in their discovery of what they call *Building a Classroom Community through Diagnostic-Reflective Portfolios.*

A diagnostic-reflective portfolio begins with an initial diagnosis and student demonstration that serves as a benchmark against which to measure the student's literacy development. Next, the teacher guides, mediates, influences, and builds on each student's strategies. The third step is reflection. Both the student and the teacher reflect on what has been done so far. This step increases reading and writing proficiency. Further diagnosis checks new learning; further scaffolding enhances and encourages more learning: and so the cycle repeats. Records and reflections of this cyclical process become the portfolio showing the student's progress over time. Essential, of course, in this process is the building of community within the classroom. Students must be made to feel comfortable sharing, questioning, and collaborating in order to participate in the diagnostic-reflective portfolio setting. The authors tell us that this can be accomplished in a caring environment with the slow, steady encouragement of the teacher.

Diagnostic tools included Carolyn Burke's "Reading Interview," administered both as a pre- and post-test, resulting in an overall assessment of students' understandings of what they do when they read as well as what they've read. Running records and Reading Miscue Inventories used during oral reading added information about individual reading processes. Retelling outlines were indicative of comprehension, and detailed, descriptive anecdotal records were used to help design learning environments. Also, spelling, reading, and writing checklists helped in reporting to parents. Goals were then set by teacher *and* student, and as part of the reflective process, the teacher assisted the students in revisiting, rethinking, rereading, and questioning their own reflections.

Assessing student literacy development has been an ongoing problem for teachers and students alike. Diagnostic-reflective portfolios as described in this book offer not only a more accurate means of assessment, but also a chance for teachers and learners to reach a level of deeper understanding of literacy development. Courtney and Abodeeb provide everything needed to replicate their study. Research in the classroom—you can do it, too.

Seasoned teachers have considerable background knowledge in how grades are determined. Grading and testing students have been up to the teacher ever since most of us can remember. Only recently have assessment and accountability become hot topics for discussion, research, and reform.

Grading and Reporting Student Progress in an Age of Standards

Elise Trumbull and Beverly Farr. 2000. Christopher-Gordon Publishers (1502 Providence Highway, Suite #12, Norwood, MA 02062, USA). ISBN 1-929024-05-3. Softcover. 224 pp. US $37.95.

Reviewed by Bonita L. Wilcox, Cambridge Springs, Pennsylvania

"Let us start with the premise that one's grading system reflects one's philosophical approach to teaching and to life in general" (p. 45). In my case, this is true. I believe that teachers and learners are individuals and that standards, instruction, and assessment strategies that work well in *one* case will not work well in *all* cases. Moving from a traditional approach to an innovative approach, such as "understanding by design" (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998), is, by necessity, developmental. And "while assessment reform has become a centerpiece of efforts to improve American education, a student's performance is still usually reported as a grade" (Trumbull & Farr, p. 4). This often results in what seems to be a misalignment. In *Grading and Reporting Student Progress in an Age of Standards*, the editors and contributors offer an overview of the issues, make clear the challenge, and suggest possible solutions to this problem.

Seasoned teachers have considerable background knowledge in how grades are determined. Grading and testing students have been up to the teacher ever since most of us can remember. Only recently have assessment and accountability become hot topics for discussion, research, and reform. Readers are reminded that standards-based assessment demands that teachers provide clear information concerning expectations and examples of quality work, and formative assessments must be reliable and valid. Unfortunately, most teachers lack the information and training of assessment experts and cannot easily change their grading practices. Most of us would probably agree that professional development and teacher involvement may result in improvements.

After a short overview of the issues of grading practices, *Grading and Reporting Student Progress in an Age of Standards* moves on to more specific issues in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. These chapters focus on the purposes of grading, technical questions and do's and don'ts, and examples of standards-based assessments. Chapter 5 explains how to design an accountability system and Chapter 9 describes how to implement a standards-based model. Chapter 8 discusses how to report the data. I want to focus on the two chapters that are sure to raise eyebrows—Chapters 6 and 7.

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Chapter 7, "Grading and Special Populations," reminds the reader that all the issues of standards and grading must be considered in grading special students, but standards and grading become less important issues for special populations. "Guidelines for establishing fair and useful grading systems associated with standards-based education have been discussed in earlier chapters, and they should apply broadly to decisions about how to grade special education and ELD students" (p. 153). Readers may be left with many unanswered questions.

In Chapter 6, "Avoiding Bias in Grading Systems," Trumbull writes, "Teachers have the opportunity to either reduce or increase the potential for bias in assessment" (p. 123). Imagine the possibilities! Eliminating bias in testing is one thing, but eliminating teacher judgment in grading is quite another thing. The idea of "bias control" in the case of teacher assessments conjures up a negativism toward teacher points of view. Trumbull suggests that even if we all agree on standards and tests, we still are not likely to come to a consensus on how to report the grade in the best interest of the student. My personal bias causes me to wonder why a consensus is necessary.

Alfie Kohn warns, "Beware of the Standards, Not Just the Tests," in an article appearing in *Education Week*. "Standards-as-mandates," he writes, "also imply a rather insulting view of educators" (p. 38). He questions whether teachers need to be told not only *what*, but *how* to teach. *Grading and Reporting Student Progress in an Age of Standards* offers information and insight for teachers into how standards, instruction, and assessment can peacefully coexist. You don't have to read this book, but if you want to read it, you are sure to have a better understanding of current thinking about the "whats and hows" of reporting student progress more accurately. ●

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Introducing

New Voices, New Worlds

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In our short history, Hyperion Books for Children and Jump at the Sun have taken great pride in publishing diverse and exciting voices in fiction such as Veronica Chambers, Michael Dorris, Louise Erdrich, Sharon Flake, Laura Godwin, Adele Griffin, Ann Martin, William Nicholson, Andrea Davis Pinkney, Lois-Ann Yamanaka, and Laurence Yep, among many others.

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Read More about It

When it comes to assessment, we often get confused with the definitions of terms. Teachers wonder what exactly the differences are among authentic assessment, alternative assessment, performance assessment, formative assessment, summative assessment, diagnostic assessment, holistic assessment, outcome-based assessment, collaborative assessment, portfolio assessment, constructive assessment, etc. Sometimes we turn to a more "standardized" language and talk about testing, scoring, ranking, sorting, and grading. With all the discussion and debate around assessment over the past ten years, many of us have questioned our own theoretical assumptions. Many of us have, in fact, changed our thinking about the purpose of assessment and what is considered to be "best practice."

One of the hardest things we do as teachers is assign accurate grades. Many think that alternative assessments have complicated the task; others think alternative assessments enable us to be more accurate with grade assignments. If we think about measuring our own progress, it is easy to view the process. When we keep a portfolio of our work, it keeps us on track, shows us where we have been, and where we intend to go next. The portfolio contains all kinds of assessments to move us forward—checklists, rubrics, college transcripts, presentations, demonstration lessons, publications, narratives, etc. We can trace our learning and set realistic goals. At the end of the term, the whole portfolio may be evaluated to determine our progress from this product. We look at the quality of the work and judge its value. However, if we wanted to assign a grade for the whole portfolio, we may have a problem with accuracy. How can we average an "A" in a college course, 3 published pieces, an international presentation, the development of a new course, and a thank-you letter from the superintendent? Perhaps, we could do a holistic assessment and ask a group of experts to rank and sort 100 portfolios from the district to determine our grade. What symbol could accurately represent a teacher's learning, progress, or improvement?

Even if you are among the fortunate and have not had to explain your grading system and articulate your philosophical stance, you may want to know more about the current thinking and best practice on the topic. Following is a list of books I have found helpful and informative for the English Language Arts:

Angelo, T., Cross, K., & Cross, P. (1994). *Classroom assessment techniques: A handbook for college teachers*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Burke, J. (1999). *The English teacher's companion: A complete guide to classroom, curriculum, and the profession*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Claggett, F. (1996). *A measure of success: From assignment to assessment in English language arts*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Crockett, T. (1998). *The portfolio journey: A creative guide to keeping student-managed portfolios in the classroom*. Englewood, CO: Teacher Ideas.

Hill, B., Ruptic, C., & Norwick, L. (1998). *Classroom based assessment*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon.

IRA/NCTE. (1994). *Standards for the assessment of reading and writing*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English.

Purves, A., Jordan, S., & Peltz, J. (Eds.). (1997). *Using portfolios in the English classroom*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon.

Strickland, K., & Strickland, J. (1998). *Reflections on assessment: Its purposes, methods, and effects on learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook.

Tchudi, S. (Ed.). (1997). *Alternatives to grading student writing*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.

Weber, E. (1999). *Student assessment that works: A practical approach*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

White, E. (1985). *Teaching and assessing writing*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2000). *Understanding by design*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Wilcox, B., & Tomei, L. (1999). *Professional portfolios for teachers: A guide for learners, experts, and scholars*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon.

Wolcott, W., with Legg, S. (1998). *An overview of writing assessment: Theory, research, and practice*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.

Third Annual CEL Award for Exemplary Leadership Call for Nominees

The CEL Award for Exemplary Leadership is given annually to an NCTE member who is an outstanding English language arts educator and leader. Please nominate an exceptional leader who has had an impact on the profession through one or more of the following:

- work that has focused on exceptional teaching and/or leadership practices (e.g., building an effective department, grade level, or building team; developing curricula or processes for practicing ELA educators; or mentoring)
- contributions to the profession through involvement at both the local and national levels
- publications that have had a major impact

Send your nomination letter, the candidate's curriculum vitae, and no more than three additional letters of support from various colleagues **by February 22, 2002**, to Dr. Rudolph Sharpe, P.O. Box 92, Hummelstown, PA 17036. For information about the seven nominees and the 2001 recipient, Wendell Schwartz, go to the CEL Web page at www.Coedu.usf.edu/cel.

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CEL Celebrated in Baltimore

The Conference on English Leadership's annual convention is the opportunity each year for English language arts leaders to meet, learn, grow, and share. Each time that we gather as a large group, we leave enriched, enlightened, and renewed. This year's convention was held at the Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel in Baltimore from November 18–21, 2001.

CEL Luncheon
Traditionally, the CEL convention is launched with the CEL Luncheon on Sunday. This year, the *English Leadership Quarterly* honored John Maitino for his article, "Using Personal Qualities of Student Teachers to Develop Effective Mentoring Relationships." The award was presented by Henry Kiernan, who also received recognition for his work as editor of the *ELQ*.

The second annual Exemplary Leader Award was presented to Wendell Schwartz of Adlai Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois. During a long and impressive career as an English department chair, Schwartz served in leadership positions at local, state, and national levels, including the Illinois Writing Project, the Illinois Association of Teachers of English, and CEL. At the luncheon, CEL also recognized this year's nominees for the Exemplary Leader Award: Jeff Golub, Shirley Lyster, Bill McBride, Ronald Sion, Jackie Swensson, and Karen Thompson.

The luncheon's featured speaker was Harvey Daniels—teacher, writer, speaker, workshop facilitator, and school reformer. In an interactive presentation, Daniels focused on Best Practice High School, an inner-city Chicago school started by Daniels and colleagues from National-Louis University. The topic of Daniels's book "Rethinking High School," BPHS is a work in progress as staff and students teach and learn following best practices within the constraints of a large urban school system. Predictably, Daniels was entertaining, informative, and well received.

CEL Convention
The CEL convention began Sunday night with a social, an opportunity to meet new convention attendees and to become reacquainted with CEL veterans. The convention proceeded through Wednesday morning. Documentary filmmaker Barbara Sonnenborn and Suan Noc Nguyen held the audience spellbound on Monday morning with the description of the making and impact of "Regret to Inform," a film about American and Vietnamese widows. NCTE President Elect David Bloome and Exemplary Leader Award winner Wendell Schwartz were also featured speakers at luncheon events.

CEL appreciates the time and energy that it takes an individual to submit a proposal for a program session. We recognize the work that goes into researching and creating the session, arranging for classes to be covered back home, and then making the trip to the convention. The program sessions focused on leadership issues dealing with curriculum, staffing, change, critical theory, standards, assessment, and mentoring. All of us are richer for the time that it took many dedicated leaders to share their expertise with us.

CEL also appreciates the work of the hospitality chair, Brannon Hertel, and his committee; Nina Bono and her management of the CEL booth; the volunteers who assist in many ways; and the generous sponsors who help to make the convention a success.

Executive Board Meeting
The CEL executive board held two meetings during the convention in Baltimore. We welcomed new members-at-large Robin Luby and Kathleen Siegfried, Willa Mae Kippes, liaison to the Secondary Section, and Debbie Smith McCullar, associate program chair for Atlanta and chair for San Francisco. The executive board thanked and bade farewell to George Shea, liaison to the Conference on English Education, members-at-large John Barber and Bob Wilson, and Baltimore Program Chair, Bernice Spearman Thompkins.

The executive board discussed several issues: constitutional changes to address the election of the liaison to the Secondary Section and responsibilities of members regarding the replacement event for the spring conference. Kent Williamson and Bill Subick of NCTE advised the board of CEL's financial forecast: mostly cloudy with sunny breaks. Membership recruitment and retention remain a constant issue. Developments at NCTE related to the Web site mean changes for the CEL Web page in terms of maintenance and currency. Sales of CEL's monograph "Great Beginnings" continue to be positive, and plans for a sequel are under consideration.

Lela DeToye, program chair for Atlanta in 2002, outlined ideas for the convention, "Celebrating the Languages and Literacies of Leadership," and distributed program proposal forms. These forms are available at ldetoye@siue.edu and should be submitted by **February 28, 2002**.

With the demise of the spring NCTE conference after Portland in 2002, CEL has decided to approach NCTE affiliates to participate in their local winter or spring meetings. For 2003, CEL has accepted an invitation from the California Association of Teachers of English to participate in their winter conference in Palm Springs.

Best wishes for 2002.

Rick Chambers
Chair, CEL

CEL Election Results

Congratulations to **Robin Luby** (Grossmont High School, LaMesa, California) and **Kathleen Siegfried** (Bordentown Regional School District, Bordentown, New Jersey), the newly elected members at large of the CEL Executive Committee. Their terms will run through 2004.

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Call for Session Proposals

"Celebrating the Languages and Literacies of Leadership"

The Conference on English Leadership (CEL) is a collaborative, dynamic, discussion-based forum for English language arts leaders to explore current and emerging issues. All English language arts leaders are invited to join the CEL conversation.

Next year in Atlanta these conversations will focus on "Celebrating the Languages and Literacies of Leadership." Please join us by proposing a session that might explore any of the following leadership literacies:

- Collaborating within schools and with wider communities
- Mentoring preservice teachers and new colleagues
- Integrating institutional, state, and national standards into existing English curricula
- Evaluating personnel, programs, and policies
- Energizing classrooms, committees, and programs
- Leading change in turbulent times
- Developing professional educators and new leaders
- Recognizing excellence in ourselves and others
- Assessing students and programs
- Promoting the English language arts to all stakeholders
- Analyzing emerging issues in the English language arts

Please find attached a proposal form. Consider developing a proposal for the 2002 Conference. You might want to jot down a few ideas right now. Present by yourself, or better yet, collaborate with others. Propose and facilitate a roundtable discussion on current leadership issues in the English language arts.

Program decisions will be made at the NCTE Spring Conference in Portland. You will hear about the disposition of your proposal in mid-May. If your proposal is accepted, you will have the whole summer to plan your trip to the Conference on English Leadership in Atlanta.

Conference on English Leadership (CEL)
Call for Program Proposals

November 25–27, 2002—Atlanta, GA
"Celebrating the Languages and Literacies of Leadership"

Part A: *(Please type or print clearly.)*

Presentation Title: _____

Contact Person's Name: _____ Title or Position: _____

Workplace Name: _____ Mailing Address: _____

_____

Telephone: Home _____ Office: _____ E-mail address _____

Names of other presenters: _____ _____

_____ _____

Suggestion for Session Chair: _____

Session Type: ❑ Individual ❑ Panel ❑ Roundtable discussion

Audience: ❑ Elementary ❑ Middle School ❑ Secondary ❑ College ❑ General

Session Synopsis for the Program: _____

_____

_____

An overhead projector is essential for my presentation: ❑ Yes ❑ No

Part B.
Attach to this form a concise description of the presentation, including objectives and activities. Please remember to include in your description the role that leadership (yours or others) plays in the success of the project or program you are presenting. CEL audiences appreciate opportunities to interact with presenters.

Send completed program proposals to:

Lela M. DeToye, Associate Dean School of Education
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Box 1049
Edwardsville, IL 62026-1049

Proposals will not be accepted by phone or e-mail, but if you have questions, please contact Lela at 618-650-3358 or ldetoye@siue.edu.

PROPOSALS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY FEBRUARY 28, 2002

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Call for Manuscripts—Future Issues

The *English Leadership Quarterly*, a publication of the NCTE Conference on English Leadership (CEL), seeks articles of 500–5,000 words on topics of interest to those in positions of leadership in departments (elementary, secondary, or college) where English is taught. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are always welcomed. Software reviews and book reviews related to the themes of upcoming issues are encouraged.

A decision about a manuscript will be reached within two months of submission. The *Quarterly* typically publishes one out of ten manuscripts it receives each year.

Surveys of our readers reveal these topics of interest: leadership studies, class size/class load, support from the business community, at-risk student programs, integrated learning, problems of rural schools, and the whole language curriculum philosophy. Short articles on these and other concerns are published in every issue. In particular, upcoming issues will have these themes:

August 2002 (deadline April 16, 2002)
Leadership and Literacy

October 2002 (deadline June 14, 2002)
Integrating Technology

February 2003 (deadline October 15, 2002)
Leadership and Professional Development
(see call, p. 7)

Manuscripts may be sent on 3.5" floppy disks with IBM-compatible ASCII files, or as traditional double-spaced typed copy. Address articles and inquiries to Bonita Wilcox at P.O. Box 142, Cambridge Springs, PA 16403; e-mail: jwilcox@toolcity.net; phone: (814) 398-2528. ●

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▶ IN THIS ISSUE

Teachers as Researchers

Bonita L. Wilcox, editor

Teacher knowledge of *scholarly* research seems essential in the *information age*, but many teachers still lack experience when it comes to reading, doing, and reporting research. As a child, I thought research was something only done by scientists. I was going to be a teacher, and my teacher didn't do research. At teachers' college, professors talked about research in education, but my professors didn't do research. At the Master's level, a research course was required. It was the dreaded class to take in the summer mostly because of the connotation of the word *research*. The course covered empirical research methods and how to read both quantitative and qualitative published research studies with some understanding. I was totally discouraged from ever doing research, and I was fairly sure that I would never enjoy reading research. But as a doctoral student, peers and mentors modeled the dispositions and behaviors of a researcher, and I learned to love research and writing.

Unfortunately, the distance between practicing teachers and university professors is great, and misconceptions concerning research abound. Researchers maintain that teachers are uninterested in keeping current with research in their fields. Teachers maintain that researchers purposely use difficult language and study superficial problems. Historically, perhaps teachers have not been good consumers of educational research, but researchers did not invite teachers into their professional conversations either. Attitudes changed in 1983, however, when the publication of *The Reflective Practitioner* (Schon) caused plenty of interest in teacher *action* research. Within 10 years, classroom teachers were publishing their teacher research (Patterson, Minnick Santa, Short, & Smith, 1993). Teacher preparation programs began to require preservice teachers to be researchers, and it has become more common for teacher educators to collaborate on research projects with classroom teachers as colleagues.

We are changing our ways of teaching and learning research, especially in teacher education programs, as you will see by the articles in this issue. Salzman, Snodgrass, and Mastrobuono's collaborative research project focuses on improving student performance by strengthening instructional practice through professional development. Márquez-Zenkov and Zaharias discuss the inclusion of teacher research in an alternative licensure program for Master's students. Finally, McFarland explains how she engages preservice teachers in meaningful research. ●

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Collaborative Action Research: Helping Teachers Find Their Own Realities in Data

James A. Salzman, Cleveland State University; Donna Snodgrass, South Euclid-Lyndhurst City Schools, Lyndhurst, Ohio; and Donald Mastrobuono, Charles F. Brush High School, Lyndhurst, Ohio

This article describes an action research project in which well organized and meaningful, graphically presented data created the desire within a high school staff to change their instructional practices in the area of writing for thinking. The data obtained by a cleverly developed survey designed to ascertain the complexity and frequency of student writing activities in high school content area courses was the impetus that prompted a high school staff to engage in staff development in the area of *writing for thinking*. Action research techniques also helped demonstrate the positive impact that the staff development program had on students' ability to employ *writing for thinking* skills.

What Is Action Research?

Action research is a method of inquiry by which teachers investigate the effectiveness of their instructional practices by engaging in a wide range of scientific activities that can be readily and practically applied in classroom settings. Action research is recognized to have value for the individual teacher-participants who engage in this type of inquiry (Calhoun, 1996; Herndon & Fauske, 1994; Mills, 2000; Sagor, 2000). The value ascribed to this process by researchers in the language arts varies from the study of writing in classrooms as a way of inspiring teachers to renew their commitment to teaching and enable them to appreciate the complexities of their classrooms (Myers, 1985) to the potential for action research to serve a transformative function in improving the literacy education of urban youths (Pappas & Zecker, 2001).

Even given the successes and potentials reported above, however, action research is no panacea. It is recognized to have a number of potential problems and shortcomings (King & Lonnquist, 1994; Nunan, 1994). One problem often cited is a lack of training in traditional research methodologies for teachers working under this umbrella (Bogdan & Biklen,1992; Gay, 1996). In order for teachers to impact educational change effectively and to be empowered as professionals, this concern must be addressed. To engage in the type of systematic inquiry that addresses the criticism levied against action research and to support teachers in this additional responsibility, Sagor (1997) suggested that "it takes the right mix of culture, history, leadership, and structural support to bring the full power of collaborative teacher research to fruition" (p. 182). Providing this support is one of the reasons that the authors have collaborated in several venues over the past five years to help teachers understand the action research process, provide them with advice as they design studies, and help them to organize their data so that it has meaning for them, allowing the teachers to see their own realities arise from the information they have collected.

Though action research differs from more traditional experimental research, we refute a common contention that it lacks scientific rigor; the rigor required to carry out an action research inquiry is simply different in a couple of significant ways. First, whereas experimental researchers strive to initially equate control and treatment groups by randomization, action researchers, more often than not, equate groups by quasi-experimental design methods, such as matching subjects and counterbalancing, and by employing statistical

The Conference on English Leadership (CEL) of the National Council of Teachers of English is an organization dedicated to bringing together English language arts leaders to further their continuing efforts to study and improve the teaching of English language arts. The CEL reaches out to department chairs, teachers, specialists, supervisors, coordinators, and others who are responsible for shaping effective English instruction. The CEL strives to respond to the needs and interests germane to effective English instruction from kindergarten through college, within the local school, the central administration, the state, or the national level.

It is the policy of NCTE in its journals and other publications to provide a forum for the open discussion of ideas concerning the content and the teaching of English and the language arts. Publicity accorded to any particular point of view does not imply endorsement by the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, or the membership at large, except in announcements of policy where such endorsement is clearly specified.

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adjustments, such as analysis of covariance. A second difference between experimental and action research lies in their intended purposes. By intent, experimental researchers strive to create a body of scientific knowledge that can be generalized to other settings and other populations. The intent of action researchers, on the other hand, is to determine the effectiveness of a particular classroom practice in a specific setting. Generalization can only occur by replication of the action research study in other classrooms with other populations of students. It is for these reasons that traditional research methodologies, especially those related to experimental designs, are not always necessary or appropriate tools for teachers to use as they engage in action research.

In spite of action research's ability to help teachers gain unexpected and valuable insight into the realities of their own classrooms, there appears to be limited motivation at both the preservice or inservice levels to help teachers develop action research skills. While there are some efforts at making action research explicit in alternative licensing programs for urban educators (see Márquez-Zenkov & Zaharias, 2002), the demands placed upon preservice teachers especially rarely allow the teaching of these required skills in their programs. As a result, many educators do not see the value of action research in their own professional situations. Furthermore, the structures often do not exist within most school communities to assist teachers in empirically evaluating the impact of their instructional practices on student performance (Popham, 2001).

For action research to become a standard tool of school-based educators, it has been our experience that three conditions must exist. First, teachers must come to view action research as a necessary and viable tool for them to use to assess the effectiveness of their educational practices. They are more likely to do this if they are able to find meaningful data from within their experiences that help them conceive of a need for investigating or changing their teaching practices. Second, teachers, or at least teacher leaders, must learn the basic methods and language of scientific inquiry. And third, collaborative structures must exist within school cultures and the greater educational community that foster and support the data collection and the data analysis that are required by any kind of scientific inquiry. The following case study is an example of how all three of these factors came together to improve the complexity and frequency of *writing for thinking* activities in the content areas in an inner-ring high school of approximately 1,500 students in Northeastern Ohio.

Though action research differs from more traditional experimental research, we refute a common contention that it lacks scientific rigor; the rigor required to carry out an action research inquiry is simply different in a couple of significant ways.

Finding Reality in Data

Our experience has been that clear and well-organized information about student performance piques teachers' curiosities in ways that prompt them to enthusiastically engage with the classroom data that we and they collect. In discussing collaborative action research, Sagor (1992) stated that "data collection is the heart of the research process, [and] data analysis is its soul" (p. 11). Obviously, the most important consideration is to collect the "right" data that helps teachers find their own classroom reality among the information they generate. A second consideration, though, is that the data collected be "compelling enough to convince any . . . skeptics or cynics [who] usually need overwhelming data to convince them of anything" (Sagor, 1992, p. 28). Once the right data are collected, we have found that graphical representations of numerical information seem to work best, at least initially, in helping teachers to find *their* classroom reality in the data, to find the "patterns and surprises" (Landwehr & Watkins, 1986) that exist within the phenomena teachers wish to study. Once understood, graphical representations can be supported by well-placed numerical values.

The Problem Surfaces

This study's tale begins where most successful action research does, with the actions taken by a group of concerned educators. The chair of the high school English department, Don Mastrobuono, concerned about the limited complexity and frequency of content area writing at the high school, raised the issue with two staff members, the chairperson of the science department and the district's testing and research supervisor (who is also one of the authors of this paper). These professionals were somewhat skeptical about the existence of a problem (and indeed, there was no hue and cry from other staff or significant stakeholders), but all agreed to investigate the matter. The three staff members decided that if there were a need to improve the quantity and quality of writing in high school teachers' classrooms, the only way to determine the extent of the problem would be to collect data about the staff's writing practices and present them with the results.

To this end, the three investigators constructed a 34-item writing survey. The survey asked content area teachers to indicate the frequency with which they required their students to participate in 34 different writing activities that were built upon the six hierarchical levels of Bloom's Taxonomy of Education Objectives. Eighty-two surveys were completed by 69 teachers at a building-wide staff meeting. Some teachers completed

more than one survey because they taught courses in more than one educational program. Teachers were not told that the items reflected Bloom's Taxonomy; they were merely asked to identify the frequency with which they employed each of the various writing tasks that reflected different levels of the taxonomy: Never, Once a Semester to Monthly, Weekly to Daily. Sample items at each level of the survey are listed in Figure 1. The results of the survey were compiled, graphically organized, and presented at the next staff meeting. These same results are presented in Table 1.

Teachers indicated that students participated most frequently in classroom writing activities at the *knowledge* and *comprehension* levels and less frequently in *application, analysis, synthesis,* and *evaluation* levels. The high frequency of activities involving *knowledge* and *comprehension*, like note taking and paraphrasing, was not surprising. These activities are often prerequisite to higher level thinking activities, as well as being a significant means by which students turn the teacher's fleeting spoken words into permanent products to which students can later refer. What was of concern to the high school staff was that a substantial percentage of teachers *never* required students to engage in any writing activities more complex than the knowledge and comprehension levels. Based on survey results, 51% of the respondents never asked students to participate in *application* activities, even though one fundamental purpose of the school's curriculum is to teach students to apply and generalize what they have learned in the classroom to real life activities. Relative to the *analysis* level writing activities, more teachers than not have their students participate in writing activities at this more complex level on at least a monthly or semester basis. However, few teachers who responded to the survey had their students perform *synthesis* and *evaluation* writing activities on a weekly or daily basis (4% and 9%, respectively). And, more than half of the respondents reported that they never required students to engage in writing at these two highest thinking levels.

Taking Action: A Collaborative Approach

The presentation of the survey results had a powerful impact on the high school's staff, most of whom had assumed that a substantially higher proportion of their students' classroom writing activities had been at much higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. As a result of being presented with this data, teachers from almost every department voted as a group to create and participate in a course, ultimately called *Writing for Thinking,* which formed the basis of staff development in the area of writing for thinking in the content areas at the high school.

The support required for this type of systemic action was greater than the typical professional development in the district. To meet these support requirements, Jane Zaharias, a Professor of Literacy at Cleveland State University, was contacted to assist Mastrobuono with the design of the graduate level course. Oya & Smulyan (1989) emphasize the importance, when entering the arena of collaborative action research, of teachers and higher education faculty working together to set goals and implement plans that are based upon concerns that arise from teachers' classrooms. In sharing power and expertise on this project, the teachers' professional development needs were met as both institutions responded to support their changes in practice.

Concurrent to the collaborative planning of Zaharias and Mastrobuono, several other district personnel used these same data and wrote a State of Ohio Venture Capital Grant to obtain funds to help finance the course. Funds were obtained for a five-year period, and a governance committee was established, consisting of teachers from several disciplines, an assistant principal, and a central office administrator. The function of this committee was to oversee the project, see that Venture Capital Funds were spent properly, and evaluate the impact of the *Writing for Thinking* project on the quantity and quality of classroom writing in the high school. According to Oya and Smulyan (1989), the creation of a project structure to support teachers' efforts, including an infrastructure that allowed planners the opportunities to leverage both human and fiscal resources, planted the seeds for the success of this type of collaboration.

Teachers from the high school's language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, foreign language, physical education, and art departments participated in the two-graduate-hour course that was offered by

How often have students been asked to do the following?

Knowledge: Copy materials off of the blackboard. Take notes.

Comprehension: Write summaries of what they have read or heard. Explain in 2 paragraphs or less, ideas that have been lectured on in class. Paraphrase what they have learned.

Application: Write letters. Write interviews. Construct timelines. Write directions. Keep journals or experimental logs.

Analysis: Write views on social issues or current events. Develop a plan or proposal to solve a problem.

Synthesis: Create or construct charts or graphs. Write a story or poem.

Evaluation: Prepare book reviews. Write a position paper or evaluate a program.

Figure 1. Sample items from writing activity survey

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Cleveland State University's College of Education graduate school. The course was offered by Mastrobuono quarterly, on site at the high school, to groups of 10–12 high school staff members, and over one-third of the high school's 100 teachers enrolled. Within the bounds of the course, writing was envisioned not so much as a method of communication but as a method of clarifying thinking itself. Accordingly, teachers learned techniques, such as focused freewriting, to help students respond to prompts in class and sort out their thoughts and reactions before responding orally. Teachers noted that this increased both the number and complexity of students' oral responses, especially from students who often did not participate in class discussions. This clarity in thinking appeared to the teachers to carry over into the written responses to class prompts. One science teacher, for instance, noted: "I felt the course helped me to target ways that I could incorporate writing into a science course. It reinforced for me how important it is for students to take their fragmented thoughts and construct something that they can play with and possibly reconstruct into stronger thought."

In addition to increasing the clarity of student thinking, teachers were asked if they had noticed a change in the clarity of their own thinking as a result of taking the course. Their responses were overwhelmingly positive. One teacher noted that the course had helped her to better organize her own thoughts, improving her ability to deliver clear instructions for students. Another stated, "In the past, I'd always thought that a person a) thinks about something, and b) writes down what he or she thought about. It was an epiphany when I realized that the act of writing actually generates thought. Sometimes when we write, we come up with original ideas we didn't know we had; that's why a freewriting journal assignment can produce unexpected ideas. It really all makes sense—we think using language, why shouldn't language stimulate thought."

Evaluating the Impact of *Writing for Thinking*

To help evaluate the impact of the course on classroom instruction, the governance board of the Venture Capital Grant engaged in a matched classroom study. In each department, classes whose teachers participated in the *Writing for Thinking* course were matched with classes whose teachers had not participated. Classes were carefully matched for content areas (e.g., American History to American History, Geometry to Geometry) and levels of difficulty (honors to honors, college prep to college prep). A second survey was designed, constructed to determine if students whose teachers had taken the *Writing for Thinking* course reported that they were engaging in classroom writing activities that were on a higher level of Bloom's Taxonomy than students whose teachers had not taken the course. Of the 561 students who participated in the study, 236 were from classrooms where teachers had not been trained in *writing for thinking* skills and 325 students were from classrooms where teachers were trained in *writing for thinking* skills. The results of this student survey are presented in Table 2.

In addition to increasing the clarity of student thinking, teachers were asked if they had noticed a change in the clarity of their own thinking as a result of taking the course. Their responses were overwhelmingly positive.

It is clear from the results that students in classes taught by teachers who had engaged in the *Writing for Thinking* course perceived themselves to be writing at significantly higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy than did students who were taught by teachers who had not taken the course. Moreover, considering that the results of the first survey to teachers, the one that prompted the course, indicated that over half of the teachers polled *never* had students writing for application, analysis, or synthesis of information, the student results bear out the significance of the professional development for the types of writing in which those students engaged. For instance, in the case of writing at the application level, more than twice as many students of the teachers who had engaged in the professional development recognized themselves as participating in writing activities identified at this level than did students whose teachers had not taken the graduate course. While we cannot document the potential impact of professional discourse outside of the professional development, we would also argue that the results of the initial survey most likely had a "trickle down" effect that impacted even those teachers who did not participate in the professional development. By working in an environment in which teachers are engaged

	Never	Once a Semester/Monthly	Weekly/Daily
Knowledge	13%	21%	59%
Comprehension	18%	25%	52%
Application	51%	31%	12%
Analysis	30%	44%	20%
Synthesis	57%	32%	4%
Evaluation	54%	32%	9%

Table 1. The frequency with which surveyed teachers engaged in writing activities at each of Bloom's hierarchical levels

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in re-thinking their own teaching practices, as well as discussing those changes, teachers who did not participate may have unconsciously changed some of their own practices.

It is not enough, however, in this era of high-stakes accountability, for students to merely perceive that they are engaging in more challenging writing assignments; they must also demonstrate it on mandated tests. Whereas Table 2 presents a clear picture of the results for matched groups of students as they discussed the types of writing they did in particular classes, the picture is not as clear on the results of the twelfth-grade proficiency test in writing. Because of later or other classroom experiences with teachers who had been trained in *Writing for Thinking*, the writing proficiency scores of students whose teachers were trained cannot be disaggregated from students whose teachers were not trained. What could be compared, however, were the scores of these students relative to the state mean.

On the twelfth-grade Ohio Proficiency Test in Writing, a test whose "primary purpose is to evaluate high school curriculum [and] measure student proficiency with respect to what is taught in high school" (Ohio Department of Education, 1997), students from this high school have consistently outperformed state means in terms of percentage of students passing the test. During the six test opportunities since the inception of the *Writing for Thinking* program (1995–96 to 2000–01), the school has averaged over a 91% passage rate (Mean = 91.67, sd = 4.76) while the state average has been less than 80% passage with greater deviation (Mean = 79%, sd = 8.63). We wish that we could also compare the performance of students before and after the teachers participated in the course. In one sense, it was unfortunate for this study that the teachers' participation in the course coincided with the beginning of the twelfth-grade test, so that there is no comparative data. In another sense, though, this effort exemplifies teachers taking a proactive approach to strengthening their instructional practices, not so much in response to high-stakes tests but for their students' benefits. The fact that stronger instruction appears to have also paid off in higher scores can be considered an ancillary benefit.

This effort exemplifies teachers taking a proactive approach to strengthening their instructional practices, not so much in response to high-stakes tests but for their students' benefits.

Conclusion

A real schoolwide problem, a real professional development solution. The former existed but may never have surfaced so lucidly were it not for the data collection efforts of a committed teacher who suspected a problem and other staff members who knew the language and methods of scientific inquiry. Presented with data that they generated themselves, the action researchers alerted teachers to an issue upon which they could take action. By creating a collaborative support network, including higher educators, district central office administration, and department chairs and their staffs, the content area teachers were able to focus their efforts on increasing student writing activities at higher cognitive levels. The payoff for students presented itself in both their perceptions of the types of writing activities in which they engaged and increased achievement in a high-stakes assessment. In this case, the school district supported this school's improvement in writing: they engaged the willing participation of committed teachers, they supported the efforts of teacher-leaders who identified a problem and were able to prescribe a potential solution; they made available central office personnel who were useful and competent in the ways of scientific inquiry; and they welcomed higher educators who were willing to research *with* (rather than *on*) teachers investigating a problem significant to them. ●

	Teachers Trained in the *Writing for Thinking Skills*	Teachers *Not* Trained in the *Writing for Thinking Skills*
Knowledge	97%	92%
Comprehension	76%	60%
Application	66%	32%
Analysis	69%	59%
Synthesis	60%	33%
Evaluation	68%	48%

Table 2. A comparison of students' perceptions of the differential impact

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Teacher Research: An Alternative Ethic in Urban Teacher Preparation

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Urban schools are intensely bureaucratic and contradictory, consistently under-resourced and poverty-bound. In addition, they must typically address the needs of populations that are especially diverse in culture, race, ethnicity, and language. One late 20th-century result—or perhaps an additional cause—of these "urban" conditions is a crisis-level shortage of qualified teachers in inner-city schools. "National data show that poor children receive less than their fair share of high-quality teachers" (Mayer, Mullens, & Moore, 2000, p. 17). Not enough college students want to teach in inner city schools, and few colleges of education specifically focus on preparing teachers for urban classrooms. "Teachers in high-poverty secondary schools are the least prepared and the most likely to lack even a minor in the subjects they teach" (Olson & Jerald, 1998). As a result, "out-of-field" teaching assignments are more common in these schools, which also tend to employ a disproportionately high number of inexperienced teachers, many of whom hold temporary, provisional, or emergency licenses (Olson, 2000a).

Tragically, the same urban school conditions that have resulted in teacher shortages frequently conspire to make city schools unresponsive to this most urgent staffing need. Burdened by outdated and cumbersome personnel practices in which school-level administrators often lack hiring authority, "many big-city districts, unsure of how many students to expect when a new school year opens, wait until the last minute to hire teachers" (Olson & Jerald, 1998). As a result, these districts may necessarily resort to hiring individuals with lower qualifications or even unqualified personnel (Olson & Hendrie, 1998). Then too, many urban school districts simply cannot match the salaries or more supportive working conditions available in surrounding suburbs, making them the choice of last resort for many job applicants (Olson & Jerald, 1998).

In partial response to this urban teacher shortage, 40 states have thus far authorized the creation of compressed training programs for prospective teachers (Olson, 2000b). Targeted to meet the needs of mid-career entrants with baccalaureate degrees in other fields, graduate-level programs that provide for highly focused coursework and intensively supervised internships have proven the most viable alternate route to licensure (Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1996). In comparison to more traditional undergraduate programs, these master's degree programs tend to attract a significantly higher proportion of minority candidates for whom there remains an enormous need (Olson, 2000b; Olson & Jerald, 1998). Moreover, while few studies have examined whether alternate-route teachers perform better in the classroom as evidenced by student achievement, research does suggest that the teachers who complete these programs perform "at least as well, if not better, on state licensing exams than traditional graduates" (Olson, 2000b). These nontraditional teacher education candidates are characteristically older and more mature, evidence a greater willingness to teach in urban environments, and are more likely to stay in the districts where they have been trained and/or hired (Olson, 2000b).

As a consequence of its decidedly urban mission, Cleveland State University (CSU) recently initiated such an alternate-route licensure program to help meet an ever-increasing local demand for inner city teachers. Now in its third year of operation, CSU's Master's in Urban Secondary Teaching or MUST program is just beginning to capitalize on traditions established during its short institutional history and essentially remains an embryonic quilt of shifting components, responsive assessments, and reactive decisions that have frequently focused on the program's integral use of teacher research.

The evolving and tenuous qualities of the MUST program closely parallel the shifting and diverse conditions that inner-city teachers and administrators must daily address. Recognizing that these defining "urban" characteristics exist across university and school boundaries has suggested to MUST faculty that a redefinition of urban teaching and urban teacher education are sorely needed. Rather than accede to the highly complex and often taxing conditions of inner-city schools, MUST has made responding to such challenges a part of its charge. MUST teacher candidates are called upon to acknowledge and understand the nature of urban institutions from the moment they enter their year-long teacher training program. Instead of allowing its interns to ignore the inherently difficult and characteristically inequitable conditions of city schools, MUST makes their commitment to urban education and to social justice an ongoing and assessable aspect of successful program completion. This commitment takes form primarily in the required design and conduct of a teacher-research project that might serve as an agency for change (Fullan, 1993; Goswami & Stillman, 1987; Greenwood, 1998).

More specifically, the MUST program encourages its interns to view the conduct of teacher research as both an ethic and a professional practice that provides one of the key tools for meeting the immediate and broader needs of city youth and schools. While in some contexts, teacher research is a goal for continuing professional development, for prospective urban teachers of core subjects in an alternate licensure program, we maintain that it is an imperative. Hence, this snapshot looks at how the inclusion of teacher research in an alternate licensure program may help respond to the longstanding challenges of urban schools (Hollingsworth & Sockett, 1994), better prepare prospective teachers to meet those challenges, and possibly reduce the disproportionately high rate of teacher attrition that continues to plague high-poverty schools (Mayer, Mullens, & Moore, 2000).

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Explicit Urban Outcomes

As previously suggested, MUST is a selective, field-based graduate teacher education initiative that serves to train future secondary teachers of English, social studies, science, and mathematics. Throughout their enrollment, students are housed at one of four urban professional development schools in the greater Cleveland area. The program requires two full-time CSU faculty members to coordinate, teach, and supervise students; additional university personnel to help offset the supervision load; and a school-based coordinator at each field site. Students are admitted as a cohort, taking classes together for the duration of the program. Prospective candidates commit to a 14-month program that includes a 9-month, unpaid, school-based internship with no concurrent employment.

MUST has made teacher willingness to consider and address the conditions of urban schools and classrooms a prerequisite for admission into, progress through, and completion of the program, as evidenced in four areas as follows: The MUST teacher candidate: a) is a reflective, responsive teacher-leader who is prepared to effectively address the effects of race, class, ethnicity, language variation, and gender on student achievement (*Social Justice);* b) promotes student learning through responsive pedagogy and utilizes a variety of strategies to address the complex demands of urban schools (*Urban Teaching*); c) demonstrates a strong commitment to urban schooling and community renewal (*Urban Schooling and Communities);* and d) responds positively to challenges and changes, demonstrating resiliency and an ethic of care in complex, demanding circumstances (*Resiliency).*

Ethics, Tools, and Realities

Rather than viewing field experiences as an opportunity to merely demonstrate and practice acquired knowledge and skills, the MUST program aims to reinforce the view that these experiences are fundamental to expanding one's understanding of the various roles that students, teachers, parents, schools, and communities all play in the instructional process by helping to establish those pedagogical habits of mind that are essential to self-directed growth throughout one's teaching career.

The challenge then to those responsible for the organization, design, and conduct of field-based programs is to determine effective ways of providing preservice teachers opportunities to engage in systematic, self-critical inquiry that will enable them to account for the strengths and weaknesses of particular lessons and the strategies they employ. Within the MUST program, this is accomplished in three phases, each of which de-

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mands a different level of student involvement, knowledge, and skill.

First, all participants are required to complete a formal course in educational research during the first summer of their enrollment. As might be anticipated, the primary purpose of this course is to help students gain a meaningful understanding of the different modes of inquiry commonly employed in educational research. Also discussed are the ethical and managerial dimensions of conducting research as well as appropriate criteria for evaluating different types of empirical studies.

Next, during the second semester of the program, students complete a methods course in their chosen field of study in conjunction with a field-based practicum. While this practicum serves the usual purpose of providing students an opportunity to apply the knowledge and pedagogical skills they are acquiring to the design and delivery of instruction, it also serves as a cognitive apprenticeship for the novice teacher-researcher as students are encouraged to "research" their classroom experiences in an attempt to generate useful knowledge that might enrich the quality of education that children receive (Burton, 1991).

Acknowledging both the developmental nature of becoming a teacher as well as the complexity and individuality of teaching practice, this element of the program might best be viewed as the formal starting point of personal and professional inquiry wherein skills in, habits of, and appropriate attitudes toward reflective practice are inculcated and fostered. This is accomplished by engaging students in a variety of school- and classroom-based research projects that help them develop expertise in observing, interviewing, and collecting artifactual information as well as analyzing and interpreting the results of their research. Generally speaking, these projects aim to reinforce a reflective orientation toward teaching by helping students to develop their problem-solving capacity through the application of a variety of research tools. By engaging in systematic inquiry, students acquire the information and skills needed to solve pedagogical problems as they explore in detail the strengths, limitations, utility, and ideological grounds of various instructional methods and materials. They gain greater understanding of the personal, social, cultural, political, and economic dimensions of teaching and learning. In addition, they come to better understand and appreciate the school as a workplace, including those external factors that impact on the daily life of teachers and their students. By way of illustration, some specific topics for research featured in the methods course on teaching secondary English follow:

Topic 1: Obtain a copy of the district's curriculum guide for one of the classes with which you will be working. To what degree do district-mandated goals and objectives align with state and national standards for teaching the English language arts? If required, how might you need to supplement the existing curriculum to better address state and national standards? Next, assuming you are a first-year teacher, what would you be expected to teach this class? Of the things you would be expected to teach, which do you like most? Which do you like least? Which would be the easiest for you to teach? Which would be the most difficult? Why? What would you need to do and learn in order to better prepare yourself for this or a similar teaching assignment? How do you propose to acquire these skills and/or knowledge?

Topic 2: Prepare a written autobiographical account of your own language development that takes into consideration ways in which each of the following factors have contributed to your ongoing linguistic growth: family background, hobbies, employment history, formal education, and residence (Christiansen, 1987). Based on this analysis, what insights have you gained that might prove helpful in your new role as a teacher? Also consider what, if any, value might be derived by having secondary students complete a similar linguistic autobiography.

Topic 3: Interview your cooperating teacher, students, and/or other school personnel to determine how mandatory proficiency testing has influenced the way in which the English language arts are being taught in your assigned building. If possible, also obtain a copy of any available writing prompts or practice items that are being used to prepare students for these exams. Based on your findings, what is your opinion of proficiency testing? Do these exams realistically measure what students know and can do? Why or why not? Should they be revised, eliminated, or retained? As currently reported, how might test results be used as an aid in instructional planning? Should high school graduation be contingent on test passage? To whom should districtwide results be made available? Finally, what additional information will you need to obtain in order to address these and other related issues in a meaningful and productive way?

Topic 4: Being sure to provide a complete bibliographic reference for the text being reviewed, prepare a written assessment of the literature anthology being used in one of the classes that you are working with this term. When preparing your critique, please consider the contents and arrangement of the anthology, its potential appeal to a diverse student population, the manner in which it provides support for reading and writing development, and its professional utility.

Topic 5: Describe in detail exactly what you do when you compose a paper. What have you learned about the writing process and the stages within that process. What are the implications of your findings for writing instruction?

Topic 6: For a period of one week, keep a record of all of the writing demands placed on students in one of the classes with which you are work-

ing. How much time is devoted to each of the following forms of writing: mechanical, expressive, transactive, poetic? What are the implications of your findings for curriculum development?

Topic 7: Ask each of the students in one of your classes to list six topics they would like to write about. Using survey or interview techniques, also investigate their attitudes toward writing and the types of writing they prefer. What forms of writing and topics appear to have the greatest appeal? Do students in this class like to write? Are they confident in their own writing abilities or apprehensive about writing? To what do you attribute observed similarities and differences in disposition and preference? What are the implications of your findings for both and writing and reading instruction?

Topic 8: Having secured a rough draft of an essay written by one of the students with whom you are working, read and respond to that student's work. Then, having asked at least one other student and your cooperating teacher to respond to the same paper, compare your written comments. In what ways are your remarks similar? How are they different? Whose suggestions would the writer find most helpful when revising this essay? Why? Now, assuming that this was a final draft, how might your comments differ? More specifically, how does responding to writing compare to evaluating it? What have you learned about commenting on students' compositions at different stages in the writing process? What have you learned about peer revision and review?

Topic 9: During the course of your field experience, you undoubtedly confronted many of the challenges that face the profession (e.g., the movement towards a national curriculum, the use of technology, increased demands for testing and accountability, the inclusion of students with special needs in regular classrooms, growing cultural diversity). Having identified one contemporary issue that you encountered, please indicate both what you learned and what you still need to know. Have any of your ideas regarding this issue changed? If yes, in what way? Also note how you plan to acquire the necessary knowledge to take an informed stand on the issue selected.

As should be apparent, at this stage in the program, students serve as junior research partners whose involvement with fundamental decisions that typically guide the research process is minimal. More specifically, while it is expected that they will derive and apply insights gained to their own professional practice, they are neither responsible for designing these studies nor identifying problems to investigate. Instead, the questions to be studied have been structured for particular purposes by the methods instructor. The results of these projects then serve as the impetus for further dialogue and discussion, which serves to emphasize that effective teaching is less a matter of adopting practices that have been validated by research than one of adapting those practices to meet varying situational needs based on systematic inquiry and critical reflection.

If teacher candidates are to learn the value as well as the logistics of studying and responding to their students, classrooms, schools, communities, and curricular content, they must ultimately engage in self-initiated study of their own learning.

Finally, during the remaining portion of the program, MUST interns extend their capabilities as teacher researchers to include the identification of a problem for study and the means for its investigation. Naturally, support is provided by both university and school personnel. This assistance begins during their enrollment in the earlier mentioned course in educational research and continues through program completion. More specifically, at the onset of their program, students are apprised of the exit requirement for which they must design and conduct a teacher-research project aimed at demonstrating their individual competencies as reflective, responsive urban teachers. In addition, they are supplied a skeletal outline detailing each of the required components of that project; this includes an introductory statement that identifies and discusses both the theoretical framework and justification or significance of the problem selected for study, a review of related literature, a description of the methods to be employed in carrying out the study, a report of resultant findings, and a discussion of the study's limitations with recommendations for future research and practice. Individual assistance is then provided by faculty committees as interns work to draft a viable project proposal, secure university and district clearance to conduct their study, implement that study, and analyze its results.

The rationale behind this formal exit project is very straightforward: If teacher candidates are to learn the value as well as the logistics of studying and responding to their students, classrooms, schools, communities, and curricular content, they must ultimately engage in self-initiated study of their own learning. Given such experiences as reflective learners, teacher candidates are better able to appreciate and employ suitable methods for uncovering the learning processes of children, especially when the life experiences of those children are vastly different from their own. In addition to coming to know and value their students while they teach them (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992, 1993), they simultaneously learn to solve their own instructional problems and to engage in dialogue that focuses on theory, research, and practice with

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their university instructors, intern peers, and cooperating teachers. Aside from empowering teacher candidates as professionals, teacher research as we envision its central role in alternate-route preparation programs further leads to increased self-confidence (Neilsen, 1990), a more positive attitude towards oneself and research (Bennett, 1993), a greater openness to learning (Boyer, 1990), as well as a concomitant increase in both commitment to continued professional growth and job satisfaction (Sucher, 1990).

These are outcomes that have historically been harder to obtain in urban environments where the constellation of factors with which teachers must contend is intensified and where novice, white, middle- and even working-class teachers often cannot begin to make sense of the constitutive differences between themselves and their students. In our opinion, engaging in teacher research gives our interns a viable set of university–school, context-crossing tools and embedded practices with which to achieve foundational program outcomes. Without it, our experience suggests that beginning teachers are all too often inclined to explain away children's academic failure as resulting from lack of effort or lack of parental support without looking hard enough at the school- and classroom-based contexts for learning that they establish, participate in, and influence. When this occurs, many would-be competent teachers fail to realize their potential, flee urban schools, and/or leave the profession out of sheer frustration.

As revealed by past and current projects, MUST interns display a gratifying curiosity about learning that is often lost in urban schools where opportunities for professional development are generally limited and good models of inquiry-based practice are hard to find. In fact, as noted by past program participants, the greatest barrier to completion of their teacher-research projects has often proven to be their assignment to cooperating teachers who neither understand, practice, nor value the "teacher-as-researcher" ethic we espouse. Obviously, veteran teachers who are flexible and open to experimentation are tremendous assets to programs such as ours, while those who believe that they have "nothing to learn from researching their own teaching methods" are key impediments to full implementation. MUST has responded to this lack of support for inquiry-oriented teaching by searching out cooperating teachers who are conversant with teacher research and by inviting honest discussion of this problem when it occurs. Despite difficulties encountered, MUST interns have demonstrated resiliency in their persistent efforts to investigate a broad range of significant issues that hold every promise of improving the quality of schools and instruction available to urban youth.

MUST interns display a gratifying curiosity about learning that is often lost in urban schools.

Conclusion

If we are to prepare urban teachers more effectively—particularly those pursuing alternative licensure tracks—then we must not just fill seats in our programs; we must shift definitions so that teacher candidates develop realistic perspectives, suitable tools, and worthy ideals for improving urban education. The features of this redefinition become increasingly clear once we acknowledge the similarity of educational institutions within urban settings and begin to ask new urban teachers to consider and respond to these conditions from the moment they begin their formal professional training.

Given the MUST program's limited history and continuous refinement, it is not yet possible to determine conclusively how and to what degree a pervasive ethic of teacher research directly contributes to the effective preparation of urban teachers. Based on our observations, however, we would concur with Cochran-Smith's (1994) contention that the "analysis of data from contrasting lesson structures—including children's written work, group discussions and other verbal interactions, observations of groups and of individual children, and the textbooks and teachers' materials themselves—permits prospective teachers to critique dominant instructional programs by treating lessons as sites for inquiry and by analyzing the ways particular materials, instructional practices, and structures of social participation constrain or support children's learning opportunities" (pp. 155–156).

We maintain that all prospective teachers—but especially those destined for urban classrooms—benefit greatly from field-based programs that encourage systematic, self-critical inquiry. In addition, we might speculate that with modest modification, the key elements of our program might prove useful in preparing teachers for positions in rural schools that are situated in regions of high poverty and/or the development of more successful and supportive induction and mentoring programs for urban teachers and others. ●

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Designing Effective Action Research Projects

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Does research have to be boring? My resounding reply is, "No way!" Recently, I discovered how an effective action research project, placed in the hands of my students, could be both exciting and meaningful in solving the pedagogical problem of teaching reading and writing strategies. I came upon this idea from Cambourne's early work as a precursor to the concept of reading recovery, which essentially asked the question, "How do good readers *read*?" Thus, my assignments developed out of the need for my Secondary Education Methods students enrolled in "Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum" to accelerate their knowledge about literacy by asking similar, essential questions. Furthermore, this same assignment has been extended to the Secondary English classroom with similar success. Whether this project is used in the university or in a secondary setting, two conceptual constructs form the framework—action research and the "Zone of Proximal Development" (Vygotsky, 1978).

Since the work of Kurt Lewin in the 1940s, action research has gained a foothold in education largely through the link between research and practice (Lewin, 1948). As applied to this study, action research has come to involve investigating a topic for the purposes of solving problems (Corey, 1953; Stenhouse, 1975; McFarland and Stansell, 1993). Although action research has had resurgence in the literature (Hubbard and Power, 1993) as scientific inquiry applied to solving classroom problems, I maintain that action research may be conducted by both the teacher and the students and be mutually beneficial. In this case, the students had the opportunity to conduct interviews and to learn much from one who has more expertise.

The study began with my own frantic question, "How was I, as a teacher educator, going to give my students a meaningful slice-of-life experience in the process of writing and reading so that they could reinforce literacy in their own future classrooms?" It had occurred to me that before I could start any literacy discussions, students first needed to conduct their own investigations to generate, reflect, and share data that addressed the fundamental questions:

What is a good writer? What is a good reader? The success of this project was overwhelming, and I believe the secret to the success was in the design.

My purpose was to accelerate the students' understandings of literacy, and my first order of business was to narrow the focus to the following specific objectives: 1) to investigate literacy as a community of learners; 2) to discover the broad spectrum of approaches to reading/writing; 3) to examine reading/writing for different purposes; and, 4) to examine the stages of the reading/writing processes. Although the original project had been adapted from Elbow & Belanoff (1995), this model had been designed to take students through the steps of generating, reflecting, and sharing data from authentic sources—real readers and writers.

The Writing Question

Students chose someone who writes a significant amount and perceives of himself or herself as a writer. Students were required to address the following categories during their interviews:

1) the kinds/variety of writing the person produces; 2) the conditions that must be present when the person writes; 3) a description of the stages of the writing process; 4) the incidents/changes the writer has gone through; and, 5) a detailed explanation of something they learned about writing from the interview. Interviews were to be scheduled for approximately 45-minute intervals, and we practiced some of our questioning techniques in class with a guest speaker before students began their own interviews.

Two stages made up the entire assignment; the first was the interview and the second was the completion of a paper. To prepare and orchestrate the interview, the students completed the following steps during the first stage of this project:

1. Read and discuss requirements of the project as a class, including the grading criteria.
2. Read examples of interviews and sample project papers written by others.
3. Create a list of 20 questions in class based on the above criteria.
4. Discuss possibilities of subjects to interview.
5. Practice mock interviews in class with invited writers.
6. Watch a video entitled "How I Write" with Nancy Gibbs of *Time Magazine*.
7. Conduct 30–45-minute interviews with chosen writer.
8. Bring individual data to class to compile into group data.
9. Integrate group data into class data and prepare a presentation.

This model had been designed to take students through the steps of generating, reflecting, and sharing data from authentic sources—real readers and writers.

After the preliminary steps were taken, students interviewed someone who perceives of himself or herself as a good writer. I never defined good writer and preferred to let students construct their own definitions at a later date. Students then organized their data from the interview to be shared in groups. Each group consisted of four members answering three questions:

1) Who did you interview? 2) What did you learn in each category? and, 3) What did you learn about writing collectively as a group?

Students then engaged in group discussions for about 30 minutes and compiled their data on an overhead transparency to be shared with the class. Group data were then collected at the end of class and compiled into class data by the instructor. All students received a copy of the class data the next day. Only then did the more meaningful discussions begin.

When we examined the compiled class data, we were able to compare our findings with the current literature in the field. Here are a few examples from each category the students developed.

General Findings on Writing

- One does not have to be a born a writer.
- Writing is important to all content areas.
- Logical thinking produces better writers.
- Writing is a complex activity.
- Writing can be habit forming.
- One person can write many different styles (poems, music, reports)
- Audience and purpose determine approach and style of writing.
- Different people have different conditions under which they write.
- Writing is developmental and grows with time.

Tough Spots in Writing

- All writers experience writer's block and periods of being stuck.
- Writers have to motivate themselves.
- Publishers are difficult to please.
- Many writers do not like to be critiqued.
- Writing can be lonely.

The Process of Writing

- Process varies according to purpose and audience.
- One who does a lot of writing may not always use the same process.
- Everyone has a different process depending on purpose of writing.
- Writers need time for ideas to grow.
- Writing improves with practice.
- Writers are always rewriting.
- Even good writers can benefit from group feedback.
- Constructive criticism and positive reinforcement from others may be valuable.

Advice for Good Writers

- Writers find it easier to write about what they know.

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- A good writer wants to engage all readers.
- Writers need to read a lot.
- Background knowledge is vital before writing.
- Importance of knowing your audience is crucial for good writing.
- Writing styles vary according to audience.
- Organization is the key to being a good writer.
- Writing involves constant reorganization.
- Writing with the computer helps with all of the stages of writing.
- Reading aloud helps the writer find his/her errors.

Collective Threads or What We Learned

- Writers need to gain and tap prior knowledge.
- Writers write about things that interest them.
- Writers write for different reasons (therapy, reflections, business, and research)
- Writers begin the writing process very differently.
- Many writers prefer composing on a computer.
- Writers spice-up writing with personal experiences.
- Getting feedback from others is important for writers.
- Research is essential for good writing.
- Brainstorming & journaling can help writers get started.
- Organization is the backbone of writing.
- Revisions, revisions, revisions.
- Writing can be therapeutic & compulsive.

The second stage of the project involved the formal paper. During the writing of the paper, the class concentrated on the stages of process writing. Students were asked to write rough drafts of the interview paper, to share rough drafts with their newly formed Writing Support Group, to polish the paper to be collected, to revise the paper for clarity style, and to compile the papers for class publication. Even though some students did not look forward to the lengthy assignment, they reported that they were excited by the results.

The Reading Question

Essentially, the reading assignment was the same as the writing assignment, without the formal paper. The goal was for students to learn about the great diversity of reading so they would have more options when they read and be more aware of the reading process. The specific goals were as follows: 1) examine the processes involved in reading different texts; 2) learn about the broad spectrum of reading approaches/strategies, 3) focus on the stages of reading; and, 4) examine how reading begins. This time the students interviewed a "good reader." Interviews were to include questions about the kind of reading the person does, the conditions that must be present when a person reads, the processes used when the person reads, and the incidents that have been helpful or harmful in reading development. Finally, the student was to reach some personal conclusions about the reading process.

After the interviews, students organized their data into categories, shared their data in groups, and presented group data to the class. Again the instructor compiled the class data, and the class compared their findings to well-known experts in the field such as Marie Clay, Brian Cambourne, Don Holdaway, Frank Smith, Jerome Harste, Marie Carbo, Kenneth and Yetta Goodman, and David Pearson. We learned about reading strategies that may be used in the classroom to promote active reading.

Sample data from reading interviews

- Processes will differ depending on what is being read.
- Reading is a process that goes back and forth.
- Prior research is necessary for difficult reading.
- Reading can be divided into components for organization of information.
- Difficult reading tasks require readers to take notes and set goals.
- Pre-reading strategies can be helpful, such as read the introduction, subheadings, and conclusion before reading article.
- Concentration is needed to read informative texts.

Conclusions

Not only did students learn about reading and writing from the interviews, they also learned through compiling and sharing their findings. Discussions were enhanced by familiarity with current thinking in the field. It was very exciting when we later compared the parallels between the reading and writing processes. This action research approach created a context for students to investigate a problem, ask higher order questions, gather data, draw conclusions, and present findings. Such action research allowed both the teacher and the students to take an active role in their own learning. This is in line with current thinking on action research (Burnaford, Fischer, & Hobson, 2001).

Although action research often involves investigating a topic for the purposes of solving problems, it can take many forms to gather data through interviews, surveys, questionnaires, oral histories, and observations. Students learn to present their findings through the traditional model of asking questions, gathering data, tabulating results, drawing conclusions, and presenting findings. Although the basic questions that we examined are a powerful way to begin action research with students, other questions may be easily formed.

Here are some suggestions from Moss & Holder (1988) that I used to design this research project for my students:

1. Construct projects in relation to course objectives.
2. Create a context for the project.
3. Clarify the project through steps or stages.
4. Have students collaborate at some stages.

5. Specify the criteria you will use to evaluate the assignment.
6. Provide models of the type of results you will expect.

I enjoyed this action research project, and it gave students a meaningful slice-of-life experience in reading and writing. They began with what they knew, and they were able to connect their findings with their prior knowledge. They could see how reading and writing are related and how their personal reading and writing processes compare to others. Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) have written that action research involves the trying out of ideas in the classroom as a means of improving skills and increasing knowledge about teaching and learning. From the perspectives of both instructor and students, this project successfully provided just such an opportunity. ●

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Book Review

Teachers Doing Research: The Power of Action through Inquiry (2nd ed.)

Gail Burnaford, Joseph Fischer, & David Hobson (Eds.). 2001. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates (10 Industrial Ave., Mahwah, NJ 07430-2262, USA). ISBN 0-8058-3589-X. Softcover. 389 pp. US $27.50.

Reviewed by Bonita Wilcox, Cambridge Springs, Pennsylvania

Most of us believe that teacher research can improve instruction and increase learning in classrooms, still most of us don't do research. Some of us may not even know *anyone* who does real research. We might feel guilty about neglecting to read published research or be apprehensive about statistical analysis. There are those who feel offended by researchers who offer impractical, superficial information; imply that teachers lack capacity and expertise; or believe they know more about our classroom than we do. Whatever side of the fence you are on, you will wish you had read this book sooner. It guides the novice through a teacher research project while it shows the expert how to share expertise in a more helpful way.

The book is divided into three parts: Ways of Doing Research, School and Professional Contexts, and The Larger Arena. Each part is divided into articles written by those with research expertise (professors) and those with teaching expertise (teachers). Reading about teacher research and then "seeing" it in action allows beginners to start on a research project almost immediately.

Chapter 4 brings you up-to-date on using technology for journal keeping, for access to Internet chats and listservs, for doing literature searches in ERIC, and for publishing your own thinking and writing. The editors have even established a Web site (http://www.teachersdoing research.com) where readers can e-mail questions or comments to any of the authors. The chapter concludes with lists of Internet resources that support researchers.

Immediately following are five pieces written by teacher/authors who have completed action research projects. From curriculum development to professional development, these teachers relate their classroom experiences and highlight stages of the process: how and why they got started, how they proceeded, and what they learned. These teacher/author pieces demonstrate a variety of approaches and suggest many possibilities for classroom inquiry. Later, in Part II, the teacher/author pieces focus on different kinds of action research situations, such as collaborative projects with college professors, students and teachers as co-researchers, and initiating teacher study groups.

What really interested me about this book was the demonstrated connection between writing and research. For those fearful of research, I have to tell you it cannot be done without writing. For those fearful of writing, it cannot be done without research. So, beginners have two hurdles to overcome. The good news is that this book "challenges the traditional role of 'teacher' and suggests a new agenda for the profession that includes the creation of knowledge and the advocacy for change" (p. 3). Research and writing are courageous acts for classroom teachers, but the personal and professional benefits are worth the risk.

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Call for Manuscripts—Future Issues

The *English Leadership Quarterly*, a publication of the NCTE Conference on English Leadership (CEL), seeks articles of 500–5,000 words on topics of interest to those in positions of leadership in departments (elementary, secondary, or college) where English is taught. Informal, firsthand accounts of successful department activities are always welcomed. Software reviews and book reviews related to the themes of upcoming issues are encouraged.

A decision about a manuscript will be reached within two months of submission. The *Quarterly* typically publishes one out of ten manuscripts it receives each year.

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August 2002 (deadline April 16, 2002)
Leadership and Literacy

October 2002 (deadline June 14, 2002)
Integrating Technology

February 2003 (deadline October 15, 2002)
Leadership and Professional Development
(see call, p. 7)

Manuscripts may be sent on 3.5" floppy disks with IBM-compatible ASCII files, or as traditional double-spaced typed copy. Address articles and inquiries to Bonita Wilcox at P.O. Box 142, Cambridge Springs, PA 16403; e-mail: jwilcox@toolcity.net; phone: (814) 398-2528. ●

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